



# What school staff need to know about vaping and e-cigarettes

Be prepared to talk with your students

[www.phu.fyi/vaping](http://www.phu.fyi/vaping)

There is a good chance that your students have been or will be exposed to vaping or e-cigarette products. As an adult, you play a key role in helping them make good decisions. This resource will give you need-to-know information about vaping so that you are better prepared to talk with your students.

## What is vaping?

Vaping refers to inhaling or exhaling vapour from an e-cigarette or holding an activated e-cigarette, whether or not the vapour contains nicotine<sup>1</sup>.

### Vaping devices have many names<sup>2</sup>:

- mods
- vapes
- e-cigs
- sub-ohms
- vape pens or e-pens
- e-hookahs
- tank systems
- electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS)



These products are small and easy to disguise. They may resemble a pen or USB stick.



### New emerging products in Canada:

- e-pens, for example: Vype
- nicotine salt vapour devices, for example: JUUL, STLTH
- heat-not-burn products, for example: IQOS

### E-cigarettes and vaping devices are typically made up of the following<sup>3</sup>:

- **Mouthpiece:** Can be disposable, changeable, or have other attachments such as a tube or hose.
- **Liquid reservoir:** Also called a cartridge, pod, tank or chamber. This is filled with liquid, often referred to as e-juice.
  - E-juice is typically made up of propylene glycol and/or glycerol, flavouring (chemicals), and many contain varying levels of nicotine.
- **Heating element:** Heats the liquid which then becomes an aerosol.
- **Battery:** Can vary in voltage and can be rechargeable.



Don't know how to answer a student's question?

Look up the information together or as a class.

### How it works<sup>3</sup>:

- 1 Vaping liquid, which contains chemicals, is heated to become an aerosol.
- 2 The aerosol is inhaled through the mouth and lungs where it is absorbed into the bloodstream.
- 3 The remaining aerosol is exhaled.

## Have open, honest, ongoing conversations with students about vaping.

### Here are some tips<sup>4</sup>:

- **Make opportunities to talk.**  
This can be during a planned lesson or as a casual conversation. It doesn't need to be formal.
- **Ask open-ended questions.**  
Try "Tell me more about..." or "How do you feel about..."
- **Be patient, positive, and listen to what they have to say.**  
Students are more likely to be honest and keep the conversation going if they feel heard and respected. Thank them for sharing.
- **Be caring.** Ask them what they need and how you can help them.

## Did you know?

Youth are more likely to engage in positive behaviors and activities if they have a strong relationship with a caring adult<sup>5</sup>.

### What else can you do?

- Ensure a safe, supportive, non-judgmental environment in the school and classroom.
- Encourage students to approach a trusted adult if they have questions or need help.
- Apply school policies and procedures on vaping consistently and respectfully.
- Seek additional support and resources from the Porcupine Health Unit.

## “Less harmful” does NOT mean safe

The safety of e-cigarettes is uncertain and the short and long-term risks of use are currently unknown. There is growing evidence to suggest that youth who vape are more likely to become tobacco smokers<sup>6</sup>.

Sharing anything by mouth, including vaping devices, can increase the risk of contracting viruses or infections<sup>10</sup> such as influenza or herpes.

E-juice often contains nicotine. Nicotine is very addictive. It is known to alter youth brain development and can affect memory and concentration<sup>6</sup>.

Aerosol produced from an e-cigarette can contain toxic chemicals (like formaldehyde) and heavy metals even if it does not contain nicotine. The health effects of second-hand exposure are also unknown<sup>6</sup>.

“Teen brains aren't wired like adult brains”<sup>7</sup>

E-juice may contain enough nicotine to be poisonous, especially to young children, if swallowed or absorbed through the skin<sup>8</sup>.



## The law<sup>9</sup>

As of October 17, 2018, in addition to tobacco products, restrictions have been expanded to include vapour products and cannabis, either vaped or smoked. Smoking of tobacco or cannabis, or the use of vapour products is prohibited in the following places:

- In public and private schools including the grounds associated with the schools and public areas within 20 meters of any point on the perimeter of the ground of the school. It is also illegal to sell tobacco and vapour products in public schools and private schools.
- Within enclosed public places and enclosed workplaces, including work vehicles.
- On children's playgrounds and all public areas within 20 metres of any point on the perimeter of a children's playground
- In outdoor sporting areas, spectator areas adjacent to sporting areas, and public areas within 20 metres of any point on the perimeter of a sporting area or a spectator area adjacent to a sporting area.

The *Smoke-free Ontario Act* prohibits the sale and supply of e-cigarettes to anyone who is less than 19 years old.

### For more information:

- [About Vaping](#) (Health Canada)
- [Where you Can't Smoke or Vape in Ontario](#) (Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care)
- [Vaping–The Mechanics](#) (Health Canada)
- The Porcupine Health Unit – [www.porcupinehu.on.ca](http://www.porcupinehu.on.ca) or 1-800-461-1818



## References

- <sup>1</sup>Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (2017). *Where you can't smoke or vape in Ontario*. Retrieved from <https://www.ontario.ca/smokefree>.
- <sup>2</sup>Government of Canada (2018). *Smoking, vaping and tobacco: Vaping*. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/smoking-tobacco/vaping.html>.
- <sup>3</sup>Health Canada. Infographic: *Vaping – The mechanics*. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health/publications/healthy-living/vaping-mechanics-infographic.html>.
- <sup>4</sup>Drug Free Kids Canada (2018). *Cannabis talk kit*. Retrieved from <https://www.drugfreekidscanada.org/order-cannabis-talk-kit/>.
- <sup>5</sup>Public Health Agency of Canada (2015). *Healthy behavior in school-aged children in Canada: Focus on relationships*. Retrieved from <http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/publications/science-research-sciences-recherches/health-behaviour-children-canada-2015-comportements-sante-jeunes/index-eng.php>.
- <sup>6</sup>Public Health Ontario. (2018). *Current evidence on e-cigarettes*. Retrieved from <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/literature-review-ecigarettes.pdf>.
- <sup>7</sup>Parent Action on Drugs (2018) *Parent action pack*. Retrieved from <https://parentactionondrugs.org/for-parents/parent-action-pack/>.
- <sup>8</sup>Government of Canada (2018). *Risks about vaping*. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/smoking-tobacco/vaping/risks.html#a2>.
- <sup>9</sup>Government of Ontario (2017). *Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017*. Retrieved from <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/17s26/v1>.
- <sup>10</sup>Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario), Hui-Chih Wu J. *Evidence brief: Communicable disease impacts of sharing electronic cigarettes with drip tips*. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2014. Retrieved from [https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/ECigarette\\_Communicable\\_Drip\\_Tip\\_EB\\_2014.pdf](https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/ECigarette_Communicable_Drip_Tip_EB_2014.pdf).