

Vaping: What Parents and Students Need to Know!

Last year, one in three high school seniors used a vape or e-cigarette. So says the study [Monitoring the Future](#), released by the University of Michigan, that surveyed 45,000 students from 380 public and private secondary schools. Here's the good news: There's probably very little smoking in the bathroom in most of our high schools. Smoking among teens has been declining for years, but it's a safe bet that [there is vaping](#). Unfortunately, we are starting to see an increase in this activity at our school.

Here's what every parent needs to know:

1. Vaping and e-cigs are not the same. Traditional e-cigarettes have a distinct cigarette taste and appeal. Far more popular with teens, vapes are small, refillable devices that heat "vape juice," atomizing the liquid into a mist. Neither device uses tobacco, but both can deliver nicotine. Vapes can also contain substances like THC, the chemical found in marijuana. However, vapes are often just the juice. According to [one recent study](#), two-thirds of teens who vape use only the flavored vaping juices that contain no nicotine, marijuana, or other drugs.

2. Vaping can be hard to detect. Vape technology has evolved quickly, making devices small and discreet. While some models are larger and look like refillable lighters with a mouthpiece, others are shaped like fountain pens. A recent story from NPR, entitled "[Teenagers Embrace JUUL, Saying It's Discreet Enough To Vape In Class.](#)" makes it clear that vaping behavior can be easy to miss. The Juul vape looks like a thumb drive and can fit in your fist. Make sure that you know what vaping devices look like.

3. Vape manufacturers target your children. The appeal to children is clear. Vape juices come in fruit juice, candy, and breakfast-cereal-style flavors. According to a [study](#) by Dr. Adam O. Goldstein of the University of North Carolina, teens perceive that fruit-flavored substances are less harmful.

In December 2017, the previously mentioned University of Michigan study reported that [51.8% of high school seniors believe that the substance they were vaping was “just flavoring.”](#)

4. Many teens don’t understand that vaping is harmful. Many people, teens included, begin vaping to curb a smoking habit. Most studies uniformly show that vaping is less harmful than smoking tobacco, but the jury is still out on the [long-term effects vaping can have on teenagers](#). Nicotine can impede brain development, and vapes can deliver a high dosage of it. Teenage vapers also report bleeding gums and what is now being called a “vaper’s cough.”

Research on the vapors emitted and inhaled from e-cigarettes has shown they deliver particles small enough to reach deep into the lungs and that they are not the "harmless water vapor" that marketers may claim. Moreover, the long-term health effects in people who get nicotine in a vaporized form over time are not known. It's also unclear whether propylene glycol, a known irritant to the respiratory tract, could result in lung problems after decades of vaping.

And because e-cigarettes have been on the market for only about 10 years, there have been no long-term studies of people who have used them for 30 to 40 years. Therefore, the full extent of e-cigs' effects on heart and lung health, as well as their cancer-causing potential, over time is not known. Another unanswered question is how the flavorings used in the devices may affect people's health. It's not yet known whether these flavorings have any respiratory effects when they are vaporized and inhaled. More research is needed to identify any hazards associated with the potential inhalation of flavoring agents.

5. Marijuana is now odor-free. Masked by sugary, fruity flavors, vape juice containing THC oil can go undetected. The University of Michigan study reports that while 1 in 10 students say they use vape juice containing nicotine, 1 in 20 teens report vaping marijuana.

6. Vaping is NOT allowed in school. Vaping falls under our existing school policy on drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. This means that any form of e-cigarette or JUUL device is prohibited on school property, inside or outside. This applies to not only students but adults attending events, including athletic events, at our school.

We encourage you to discuss this with your children. Please follow the links in the above article for more information or you can contact us at the school.

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