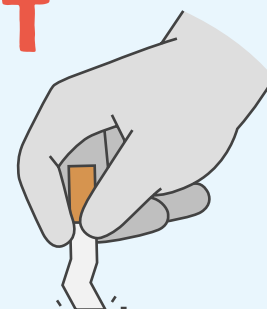


NICOTINE REPLACEMENT THERAPY OR NICOTINE VAPING PRODUCTS?



There are a lot of myths about e-cigarettes and nicotine vaping products. It is important as a carer that you are aware of the facts. If you have heard that e-cigarettes or vaping can help you or the person you are caring for to quit smoking, you should first speak with your doctor.

Here we look at Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) and nicotine vaping products because it is important to know the difference.

The key point is that e-cigarettes and nicotine vaping products are not first-line treatments for smoking cessation. They are sometimes marketed as a way to quit smoking but there's not enough evidence to show that they help – or are safe.



Nicotine Replacement Therapy

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) aims to reduce the cravings and withdrawal symptoms that occur when a person stops smoking. By giving small, measured doses of nicotine into the bloodstream, the person is not getting the harmful chemicals from tobacco smoke.

Because NRT provides some nicotine, it can help people who are stopping smoking deal with cravings and feelings of withdrawal such as irritability, anxiety, depression and restlessness.

Faster-acting types of NRT, which include the mouth spray, gum, lozenges, and inhalator, gives nicotine more quickly than nicotine patches. Nicotine patches provide a slower, steady level of nicotine over a longer period of time. Most

people who smoke have a better chance of success if they use combination therapy (a slow acting and a fast-acting type of NRT at the same time)

NRT is safe to use for most people, but it's best to speak to a doctor or pharmacist before starting NRT. The amount of nicotine in NRT is lower compared to a cigarette and the different types of NRT pass strict safety standards set by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) before they can be supplied in Australia.

NRT can be purchased from most pharmacies, supermarkets or online. Discounted nicotine patches, gum, and lozenges are also available on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) with a prescription.

There are also other factsheets that may be useful to you as a carer:

- Myths about electronic cigarettes and nicotine vaping products
- How can I access nicotine vaping products for myself or the person I care for?
- Tips for talking to a doctor to help quit or reduce smoking
- Tips for talking to the person you care for about smoking, vaping and quitting
- Nicotine Vaping and Young People

Nicotine Vaping Products and e-cigarettes

Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) simulate the act of smoking, but they don't burn tobacco. They are battery-operated devices that heat a liquid into a vapour for breathing in (inhalation). Using an e-cigarette is commonly known as 'vaping' and they may be used to inhale nicotine vaping products, or nicotine-free 'e-liquids' or 'e-juices'.

Nicotine vaping products have not been approved by the TGA, and it is illegal for anyone in Australia (other than pharmacies) to supply or advertise these products.

Evidence suggests that people who use nicotine vaping products to quit smoking might have difficulty in then quitting vaping¹, and people using e-cigarettes are three times more likely to smoke tobacco cigarettes than those who have not used e-cigarettes, and former smokers who use e-cigarettes are more likely to relapse and start smoking again.²

Australians now need a prescription to legally access nicotine vaping products for any purpose, including smoking cessation, even when importing these products from overseas.

It is important to also know that even without nicotine, e-cigarettes are not considered safe. The liquids used in e-cigarettes may:

- » contain some of the same chemicals found in tobacco cigarettes,
- » contain toxic chemicals including those that add flavour, which are known to be cancer-causing agents or cause DNA damage,
- » contain high levels of heavy metals, and
- » sometimes contain nicotine even if it is labelled as 'nicotine free'.

E-liquids can cause poisoning if they are swallowed or come in contact with the skin or eyes of children and adults, even if they do not contain nicotine. **Please seek urgent medical attention if you think that you, or anyone else, may have been exposed to or swallowed an e-liquid.** Emergency services can be contacted by calling 000 and the Poisons Information Centre can be contacted by calling 131 126.

1. Cancer Council Victoria

2. ANU National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health

SOURCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

- » Quitline '[Nicotine replacement therapy \(NRT\): frequently asked questions](#)'
- » Australian Government Department of Health '[Quitting methods](#)'
- » Make Smoking History (Cancer Council WA) '[Stop smoking medications guide](#)'
- » Be Smoke Free (SA Government) '[Facts about nicotine replacement therapy \(NRT\)](#)'
- » Australian Government Department of Health '[About e-cigarettes](#)'
- » Lung Foundation of Australia '[E-cigarettes and vaping](#)'
- » Healthdirect '[E-cigarettes \(vaping\)](#)'
- » Therapeutic Goods Administration '[Nicotine vaping products: Information for consumers](#)'
- » Cancer Council Victoria '[Nicotine vaping products for quitting smoking](#)'

REMEMBER!

Seek support from your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions about how to help someone access nicotine vaping products or support with smoking cessation. You can also phone the **Quitline on 13 7848**.

Visit the Carer Gateway website at carergateway.gov.au/help-advice or call them on 1800 422 737 to find local services and support for carers.

All factsheets can be found at carersaustralia.com.au/medicine-safety/smoking-cessation-nicotine-products-and-e-cigarettes

