

HOW CAN I ACCESS NICOTINE VAPING PRODUCTS FOR MYSELF OR THE PERSON I CARE FOR?

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 nicotine vaping products can help you or the person you are caring for to quit smoking, you should first speak with your doctor. Many people who use e-cigarettes and nicotine-containing e-liquids are not aware of how to get nicotine vaping product legally in Australia.

The key point is that it is illegal to sell, buy or use nicotine vaping products in Australia, unless it has been prescribed by a doctor.



What are nicotine vaping products?

Nicotine vaping products contain nicotine in solution and are intended to be vaporised or inhaled using a vaping device. Common nicotine vaping products are liquid nicotine (nicotine e-liquids, e-juices and vape juices) and the nicotine solution in prefilled nicotine e-cigarettes and pods.

Vaping devices are the electronic devices that heat a liquid into a vapour for breathing in (inhalation). Vaping devices include e-cigarettes, e-cigars, vape pens, and other electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDs), even if they are disposable.

Vaping devices can also be used to inhale nicotine-free liquids. But even without nicotine, vaping is 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.

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

- Myths about electronic cigarettes and nicotine vaping products
- Nicotine Replacement Therapy or Nicotine Vaping Products?
- 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

You need a prescription to buy or use nicotine vaping products

Since 1 October 2021, the supply of nicotine vaping products to someone without a doctor's prescription has been illegal in Australia. Nicotine vaping products can only be legally used by the person named on the prescription – they cannot be given to friends or family members in Australia or overseas.

This means a person cannot import nicotine vaping products and refills from overseas websites without a prescription that has been provided by an Australian-registered medical practitioner.

In addition, it remains illegal for retailers, such as tobacconists, 'vape' shops and convenience stores, to sell people nicotine vaping products - even if the person has a prescription. If purchasing domestically, you must get the prescription filled at an Australian community or online pharmacy.

If you or the person you care for uses nicotine vaping products, you may still be able to access the products for smoking cessation if a doctor thinks this is an appropriate treatment to help stop smoking and gives you a prescription.

If you intend to purchase nicotine vaping products from an Australian pharmacy, it is important to know that you will need a prescription from a doctor that has obtained TGA approval as an Authorised Prescriber or under the Special Access Scheme.

However, if you intend to import nicotine vaping products (for example, by purchasing them on an overseas website), you can obtain a prescription from a doctor that does not have TGA approval as an Authorised Prescriber or under the Special Access Scheme.

A doctor can also refuse to prescribe a nicotine vaping product.

Nicotine replacement therapies (including sprays, patches, lozenges and chews) that do not require a prescription are still available from pharmacies and some retail outlets.

The Australian Government Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) [website](#) has more information, including:

- » A video to learn more about the changes and how a person can legally access nicotine vaping products
- » A consumer fact sheet on the regulatory changes
- » A flow chart that illustrates the steps involved in legal access to nicotine e-cigarettes in Australia, and
- » A list of doctors who are already Authorised Prescribers of nicotine vaping products.

What if someone is vaping with no nicotine?

There are no changes to the availability of vaping products (including e-cigarettes) and vaping devices that **do not** contain nicotine. However, it is important to know that in most states and territories, even if the e-cigarette contains no nicotine:

- » a person can't use e-cigarettes in public places where they are also prohibited from smoking cigarettes.
- » It is illegal to sell e-cigarettes or any accessories or vaping products to, or buy them for, anyone under the age of 18, even if they do not contain nicotine.

Smoke-free and tobacco control laws vary from state to state, so check your state's legislation [here](#).

SOURCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

- » Australian Government Department of Health '[About e-cigarettes](#)'
- » Therapeutic Goods Administration '[Nicotine vaping products: Information for consumers](#)'
- » Healthdirect '[E-cigarettes \(vaping\)](#)'

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

