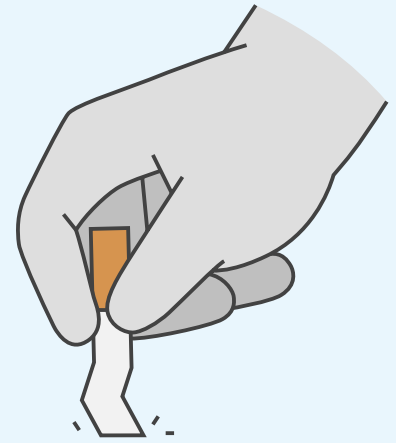


NICOTINE VAPING AND SMOKING

YOUNG CARER FACTSHEET



As a young carer who provides unpaid care and support to a family member or friend with a disability, physical or mental illness, a substance dependency or who is aged, it can be a very stressful, mentally draining, and an isolated position to be in.¹

Many young people start smoking to deal with stress, to fit in or because of peer pressure, and long-term adult smokers often began smoking as young people – 80% began before the age of 20.²

What is becoming a big concern is nicotine vaping by young people in Australia, including the use of e-cigarettes. E-cigarettes, also known as 'vapes', are battery operated devices that work by heating a liquid (or 'juice') until it becomes an aerosol that users inhale.

Some people mistakenly believe the 'cloud' from vaping is a vapour, like steam. It is really an aerosol, a fine spray of chemicals that enter the body via the lungs, and small particles that can lodge in the lungs.³ Common names for nicotine vaping devices include e-cigs, BIDI Sticks or Stif's, Mods, Tanks or APVs.

Did you know?

- » In 2019 e-cigarette use was higher among younger age groups with **64% of smokers aged 18–24** trying an e-cigarette in their lifetime, compared with 26% of smokers aged 60–69.
- » In 2017, **1 in 5 (21%)** secondary school students aged 16–17 had tried e-cigarettes.
- » The most common reason for trying e-cigarettes for people aged 18 and over was **curiosity (53%)**, but people's reasons varied by age.⁴

There are a lot of myths about e-cigarettes and nicotine vaping products. This is an issue because evidence suggests vaping can be a gateway to smoking tobacco cigarettes, and it is not harm free.



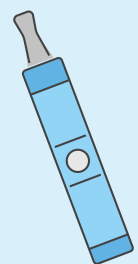
Nicotine is a toxin

E-cigarettes can contain high levels of nicotine (even if labelled as 'nicotine free'). Nicotine is among the most addictive substances known and nicotine addiction happens really fast, which makes it hard to stop vaping and increases the chance you'll start smoking cigarettes to get that nicotine 'hit'. It is also a toxin, especially for young people – it affects brain development, memory and concentration.⁵

E-liquids may not be safe even with no nicotine

E-liquids can cause poisoning if they are swallowed or come in contact with the skin or eyes, 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.

The long-term health effects are still relatively unknown but what we do know is that vaping is associated with side-effects such as nausea, vomiting, mouth and airway irritation, chest pain and palpitations.⁶



1 Young Carers Network
 2 Australian Government 'Smoking and tobacco and young people' webpage
 3 Quit
 4 AIHW
 5 RCH 'E-cigarettes and teens' webpage
 6 Lung Foundation

E-cigarettes wont help you to quit smoking

E-cigarettes are also sometimes marketed as a way to quit smoking but there's not enough evidence to show that they help – or are safe.

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. Nicotine vaping products are not the same as Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT).

Avoid trouble – know the law

You need a prescription to legally access nicotine vaping products for any purpose, including smoking cessation, even when importing these from overseas. This includes ordering the products and refills from overseas websites.

It is also 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.

7 [Tobacco in Australia](#)

SOURCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

- » Australian Government Department of Health '[Helping someone quit](#)'
- » Therapeutic Goods Administration '[Nicotine vaping products: Information for consumers](#)'
- » Healthdirect '[Quitting smoking](#)'
- » [Aboriginal Quitline](#)
- » Royal Children's Hospital Podcast '[How harmful can vaping be?](#)'
- » Alcohol and Drug Foundation '[Talking about vaping with young people](#)'
- » Lung Foundation '[Vaping and young people for parents and carers factsheet](#)'

I'm caring for someone that wants to quit smoking – how can I help?

It may be hard to watch the person you care for start or continue to smoke when you know it is damaging their health.

It is important as a young carer to seek support if the person you are caring for is quitting smoking. Here are a few things that are good to know to start with:

- » Stopping smoking is different for everyone. Some people find it easy to quit, others don't. Most people who have quit smoking for good have made several serious attempts.
- » If a person has been smoking for a long time, their body is used to regular doses of nicotine and when they quit smoking they will may withdrawal symptoms. These can last for a few days to a few weeks and are different for everyone, and may include feeling tense and irritable, appetite changes, and trouble sleeping.

The chemicals in tobacco smoke can affect how some medicines work while a person smokes nicotine, and also if they stop smoking.⁷ This means that some medicine dosages may need to be changed when a person stops smoking.

There are also other factsheets that may be useful to you that have been developed to help carers assist the person they care to support someone with quitting and understand vaping:

- ⊗ Myths about electronic cigarettes and nicotine vaping products
- ⊗ Nicotine Replacement Therapy or 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

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 Young Carers Network for information and pathways for support for young carers at youngcarersnetwork.com.au

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



P (02) 6122 9900

E caa@carersaustralia.com.au

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