

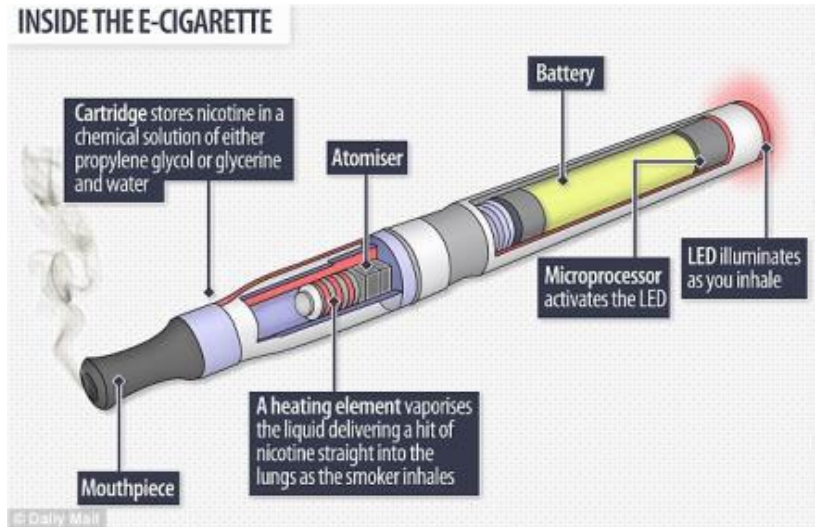
VAPING GUIDANCE

by Dr. Carly Wilbur, UH Pediatrician and PSI Medical Director • Fall 2022

Vaping refers to the inhalation of aerosolized particles of a drug (marijuana or nicotine), mixed with flavoring. Most vaping devices contain a battery for power, a heating element, a place to insert the drug-containing liquid that will be heated until it vaporizes, and a mouthpiece.

Vaping was initially developed to help adults quit smoking, but quickly became popular among teenagers.

From 2011 to 2019, the CDC reported a 900% increase in vaping for teens in high school.



And while current reports estimate about 30% of high schoolers have vaped or currently vape, 5% of middle schoolers admit to the same.

On a chemical level, the nicotine salt delivered from a vape pen is far more powerful than the nicotine free-base that cigarette smokers inhale. This makes vaping nicotine extremely addictive. Studies show that teens who vape are 7 times more likely to smoke as adults. And over half the high schoolers polled admitted to having had their first vaping experience at age 11 or younger.

The immature frontal cortex of a teenager's developing brain is uniquely susceptible to the harmful effects of nicotine. Regular use can cause long-term irreversible deficits in memory, attention, and concentration, and also mood disorders and permanent impairment of impulse control. Tobacco use in adolescence can also prime the brain for addiction to other stimulants of abuse like cocaine and methamphetamines.

Vaping is a \$22 billion industry worldwide, with Juul being the predominant brand of electronic cigarette. Advertisements that falsely claim vaping is safer than smoking, along with child-friendly flavorings like birthday cake and mango, drive a powerful marketing campaign aimed at hooking younger consumers. The Surgeon General accurately labeled teen vaping an epidemic, and it's a gravely dangerous one: nicotine-related deaths kill more adult Americans every year than alcohol, AIDS, car accidents, illegal drug abuse, murder, and suicide COMBINED. **Let's work together to keep our kids from vaping. It might even save their lives.**

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