

# Vaping factsheet



## What are vaping devices?

Vaping devices are battery-powered devices that heat a liquid to produce an aerosol that is inhaled. The liquid usually contains nicotine.

There has been a rapid increase in the use, availability and promotion of vaping devices. Vapes were originally marketed as an alternative to smoking cigarettes and have gained popularity amongst some adults trying to quit smoking.

The function of vaping devices is to vaporise and deliver to the lungs of the user a chemical mixture, typically composed of nicotine, propylene glycol and other chemicals.

- Unlike cigarettes, there is no combustion (burning) involved in vaping devices, so there is no smoke and no other harmful products of combustion, such as tar and carbon monoxide.
- This does not mean they are entirely safe, but they are understood to be less harmful than smoking as they do not contain the tar, carbon monoxide and other products that cause many smoking related illnesses.
- Vapes are an age restricted product and should not be sold to anyone under the age of 18.



## Why do young people vape?

There are a number of things that could motivate young people to vape, such as peer influence, social image and perceived lower health risks of vapes compared with cigarettes.

Other common reasons include to support mental health, reduce stress levels and address low self-esteem. Vapes are used as a perceived coping mechanism to address these issues. However, young people who vape for stress relief report significantly higher stress levels than those who don't vape.

Young people's brains are still developing, so they can't always think through the consequences of the things they do. This means they're more likely to try things like vaping out of curiosity or 'for fun', without considering the harm they could be doing to themselves.

Vapes are colourful and come in lots of different flavours, which can seem appealing to young people. They don't seem scary or harmful, as cigarettes do.

### Getting help and support

If you're concerned about your child vaping, you can talk to your GP or call **Quit Your Way Scotland** on **0800 84 84 84** for advice and support.

For more information and advice visit [parentclub.scot/vaping](https://parentclub.scot/vaping) and [nhsinform.scot/vaping](https://nhsinform.scot/vaping).

## Why is there concern about vaping among young people?

Vaping is much better for you than smoking. However, although we don't yet fully understand the long-term effects vaping has on our health, evidence shows that e-cigarettes or vapes are not harm-free.

Vapes contain nicotine, and may quickly become harmfully addictive to young people. Nicotine addiction can affect their concentration and impact their ability to learn and study. Nicotine withdrawal also disrupts sleep and may cause headaches. It can also affect their mental health and mood.

While the long-term effects of vaping are still being researched, it's thought they can have a negative impact on the health of the heart and lungs, but there is currently insufficient evidence to assess this. However, Cancer Research UK, the British Heart Foundation, the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health and the Royal College of Physicians all state that vapes should only be used by adults who smoke as an aid to give up smoking.

