

## Vaping and Asthma

### What are vapes?

Vapes (also known as e-cigarettes) are devices that heat up a liquid that you can then breathe in as a vapour.

The liquid usually is made up of nicotine, a flavouring and other chemicals.

Some vapes are nicotine free.

Vapes can be re-usable or single use and come in lots of different flavours.

### Are vapes safe?

Scientists have been looking at how smoking cigarettes affects our health for many years.

We know the long-term effects of smoking cigarettes are bad for our health, especially our lungs, because it's been studied for a long time.

But vapes haven't been around long enough for scientists to be able to study the long-term effects of vaping. They are starting to know a bit more now though.



### So what do we know?

It has been suggested in the past vaping is less bad for your health than smoking. It was also thought that switching to vaping from smoking might mean you are more likely to be able to stop smoking, so doctors have encouraged people who are addicted to smoking to start vaping instead.

But this has meant that lots of people believe that vaping is safe, and we now know that's not true.

**Lots of people think vaping is safe, but we now know that's not true.**

**Vaping can cause serious, permanent harm very quickly.**

There are growing concerns that vaping may be as dangerous as smoking both in the short term (soon after you start vaping) and the long term (many years after you start vaping).

The evidence is also starting to suggest that people who vape are more likely to take up smoking than those who don't vape.

The best thing to do is to never vape or smoke at all.

## What are the health risks from vaping?

All vaping can be bad for you. Even vapes that don't contain nicotine can be bad for your health because of the other chemicals they contain.

We now know that young people who vape are 30% more likely to have long term health problems than those that don't, for example, they are more likely to:

- have a long-term cough
- have a dry throat
- develop a lung infection (pneumonia)

Young people who have asthma and vape are more likely to

- have worse asthma symptoms
- miss school due to their asthma symptoms
- have an asthma attack

You can also become seriously unwell after vaping even for a short time. Some people have needed to go on a breathing machine, have permanently scarred their lungs or have even died.

## What about second-hand vaping

Even if you don't vape, but you breathe in other people's vapour, you can still be affected – we know young people with asthma who are exposed to other people's vapes are much more likely to have an asthma attack.

## What about the environment?

Vaping is also bad for the environment; disposable vapes are made of single use plastic which is causing a huge waste problem.

Vapes also contain things like Lithium, which means it can't be used to help make other things like electric cars which are better for the environment.

## What can I do?

- ✓ The best thing to do is to never start vaping. Even vaping for a short time can be dangerous. Once you start, you can become addicted to the nicotine that can make it hard to stop. We also know that if you start vaping you are more likely to eventually start smoking, which is even worse for you.
- ✓ If your friends vape, ask them to not vape around you, or move away from them when they are
- ✓ If you are already vaping:
  - talk to your doctor for help to quit
  - try nicotine replacements like patches, gums or sweets
  - use apps that can help keep you motivated
  - if you have a time of day when you regularly would vape, for example, after food, try changing your routine so you are doing something else instead

