

Vaping Discussion Guide

Need to talk to a teen about vaping? Here's how to get the conversation started.

How to Talk With Teens About Vaping



Vaping has become an epidemic among young people. Most kids and teens have heard about vaping from someone, often their peers. They need to hear from the adults in their life, too. Maybe you caught your child vaping, or found a device in their laundry. Perhaps you want to talk to your teen about vaping because their friends are doing it. There isn't a one-size-fits-all solution. You know your child best, so consider how to adapt the following recommendations from the experts at Quit for Life[®] to meet your needs. ●



See It From Their Point of View

Adolescents are at a developmental stage where they want to be independent, and they're looking for excitement. This combination can lead to experimenting with risky behaviors. When teens take risks, you may ask, "What were they thinking?" It is likely they weren't thinking at all. Parents and other authority figures are engaged in a balancing act of trying to grant children freedom while keeping them safe. If teens interpret well-meaning health advice as intruding or controlling, they may assert their independence, leading to a stronger conviction to continue vaping and hiding it.

Teens may be more likely to consider advice from adults if you support their independent decision making. They may want to exercise their independence by not sharing everything with you. They may have worries or fears they need to talk about. Try to show empathy for what they are going through and the pressure they may feel from peers. Here's how to have the conversation. ●





Have a plan and gather your thoughts

Find the right time to have a conversation. Perhaps a shared activity that makes it easy to chat, such as shopping, riding in the car, watching TV, or at a sporting event. Or casually bring up the topic when you're walking by a vape shop or see someone vaping. With some teens, texting may be a good way to start a conversation.

Know the person

Consider their needs, values, and beliefs. And weigh their past experiences, circle of friends, and other factors that will influence your discussion about vaping.

Convey your expectations

Share your understanding of the risks of vaping and be clear that you are interested in your child's health and safety.

Consider your own behavior

Do you vape or smoke? You may want to consider quitting so that you can offer advice as a role model. If you've found it hard to quit, prepare for an honest conversation about addiction and the difficulty of stopping.

Less is more

Pace the conversation and the amount of information that you offer. The more you listen, the more likely they will ask about your point of view. Provide the right "dose" of education.

Set realistic expectations

Be prepared to have more than one conversation. Start by trying to understand their point of view.

Be prepared with good information about vaping

There are a lot of exaggerations and inaccurate information about vaping. See "Know the Facts About Vaping" (below) to help you answer some of their questions.

Commit to being calm and patient

You may feel worried, scared, or angry before the conversation. Think about how you can contain your emotions during the talk. It will be easier to clearly state your point of view if you remain calm.

Don't lecture, explain, or blame

Instead, observe and listen. Young people will be more likely to be open with you if they feel heard and not judged. Find out what they're thinking. Don't interrupt. Respond accurately when asked a question.

Actively listen without judgment

Take note when a teen may be sharing only a small part of the story. They might be testing you. Try not to overreact. Be patient and listen actively. Allow them to talk and they may reveal more of the story.

Be curious

Ask open-ended questions that show you care. Set the conversation up so that they can make a "healthy" decision that fits within their own value system. One way to do this is to give teens the space to weigh the pros and cons. ●



The Teen Vaping Epidemic 🪦💀

- E-cigarettes are far and away the most commonly used form of tobacco by young people in the US.
- More than one in four high school students and one in 10 middle school students reported vaping in the last 30 days.
- Seven in 10 adolescents have been exposed to e-cigarettes in ads.
- Those who use e-cigarettes are four times more likely to smoke cigarettes later on.
- Boys are twice as likely to vape as girls. ●

Know the Facts About Vaping 🔗

- There is clear evidence that e-cigarettes pose a significant health risk to young people.
- Exposure to nicotine through e-cigarettes can affect brain development into the mid-20s, making people more addicted into adulthood.
- About one in three teens who vape goes on to smoke cigarettes within six months.
- Two in three teens believe the only thing in their e-cigarettes is flavoring.
- Flavors are banned from refillable e-cigarettes, but disposable devices sold in vape and convenience stores may still have them.
- Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine. Some vaping devices allow higher levels of nicotine to be inhaled than other tobacco products.
- Some e-juice flavorings contain diacetyl, a chemical that causes the serious lung disease, bronchiolitis obliterans — more commonly referred to as “popcorn lung,” after workers in a popcorn factory were sickened.
- Aerosol from e-cigarettes can contain harmful and potentially harmful chemicals, including:
 - nicotine
 - ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs
 - volatile organic compounds
 - cancer-causing chemicals
 - heavy metals, such as nickel, tin, and lead
- For teens, using nicotine can harm the parts of the brain that control attention, learning, mood, and impulse control.
- Like secondhand smoke, e-cigarette vapors also pose a risk to young people. ●



How to Tell if a Teen Is Vaping

Know the equipment

Clues include devices that look like flash drives, e-juice bottles, pods, or the packages they come in, as well as cannabis products like gel jars, cartridges, and other paraphernalia.

Know the lingo

Text messaging lingo, like “atty” for atomizer or “VG” for vegetable glycerine found in e-juice, can be clues.

Check social media

You may see teens flaunting their vaping on social media feeds, like Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, or Snapchat.

Look at packages and receipts

Watch out for online orders or unexpected packages. You might also find receipts from stores or gas stations lying around.

Scent

It’s not as telltale as cigarette smoke, but a faint, lingering scent of bubble gum or chocolate cake may be from the e-cig flavoring.

Increased thirst

Vaping can dry out the mouth and nasal cavities. Some kids may drink more liquids after they start vaping.

Nosebleeds

Likewise, dried out nasal passages may make kids more prone to nosebleeds.

Decreased caffeine use

Some people develop a sensitivity to caffeine after they start vaping. If your child suddenly quits energy drinks or other caffeinated beverages, it could be a hint.

Behavior changes

Nicotine withdrawal can cause irritability. Cannabis use can shift behavior, appetite, and mood. ●



Selected References

- E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults. A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2016.
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