The Vermont Department of Health calls attention to the potential harms of using electronic cigarettes, including nicotine addiction and exposure to chemicals. E-cigarettes, also called personal vaporizers, vape pens, e-cigs, e-hookah, or vaping devices, are products that produce an aerosolized mixture containing flavored liquids and nicotine that is inhaled by the user. Health care professionals play a key role in educating patients on maintaining lung health by reducing exposure to lung irritants and using proven effective and safe smoking cessation medications.

The Department of Health urges health professionals to recommend FDA-approved quit methods to their patients, available free through 802Quits, and educate parents and patients on the potential harms of e-cigarettes.

Not an FDA-Approved Quit Aid

E-cigarette manufacturers market their products as tools to help quit smoking, but studies show that e-cigarettes can actually deter cessation.

- The American College of Physicians has warned that there is insufficient evidence that e-cigarettes help people quit smoking.¹
- A study in the American Journal of Public Health found that smokers who used e-cigarettes were 59 percent less likely to quit smoking than smokers who had never used e-cigarettes.²

Not Harmless “Water Vapor”

E-cigarettes contain a concentrated liquid nicotine solution and toxic chemicals that create aerosols.

- Nicotine is a highly addictive neurotoxin that affects the cardiovascular and central nervous systems, causing blood vessel constriction and increasing blood pressure.³
- E-cigarette use can cause lung irritation and inflammation similar to conventional cigarettes.⁴
- The FDA tested and found that e-cigarette samples contained tobacco-specific nitrosamines and toxic chemicals.⁵

Youth Use is Rising Rapidly

E-cigarette use among youth has steadily increased and nicotine use negatively affects youth brain development.

- From 2011-2014, past 30 day use of e-cigarettes increased nine-fold for high school students in the U.S. (1.5% to 13.4%). In 2014, the rate of e-cigarette use among high school students was higher than for conventional cigarettes (13.4% and 9.2%, respectively).⁶
- The American Academy of Family Physicians is concerned that e-cigarettes are a gateway for youth nicotine addiction.⁷
- The American Academy of Pediatrics warns that nicotine is highly addictive and adversely affects brain development from the time a child is in utero into adolescence.⁸

Recommendations for Providers

Advise Parents, Youth and the Public

E-cigarettes contain nicotine, a highly addictive substance that is especially harmful to youth and pregnant women. E-cigarette users may also be exposed to toxins.

Encourage Cessation Using Proven Quit Aids

Refer users to 802Quits services to receive free phone, in-person, or online cessation support and free Nicotine Replacement Therapy.

Educate about Clean Indoor Air

There is potential harm of secondhand exposure from aerosol emissions, especially for children.


