

# ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES: INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

## What are electronic cigarettes?

- Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) are battery operated devices that contain nicotine, flavors, and other chemicals. (FDA, 2013)
- Illegal substances, such as marijuana, have been used in e-cigarette devices.
- E-cigarettes give off a vapor instead of smoke. The vapor comes from heating a liquid.
- E-cigarettes are available in different flavors, such as chocolate, strawberry and mint, which may appeal to young people. (FDA, 2013)
- E-cigarettes are designed to look like and be used in the same way as regular cigarettes. (FDA, 2013)
- They are also called vaporizer pens and hookah pens. Here are some examples:



## E-cigarette use among teens

- In California, the sale or furnishing of e-cigarettes to individuals younger than 18 years of age is prohibited by state law. (California Health and Safety Code, Section 119405)
- The percentage of U.S. middle and high school students who use e-cigarettes more than doubled from 2011 to 2012. (MMWR, CDC, 2013)
- In 2012, more than 1.78 million middle and school students nationwide had tried e-cigarettes. (MMWR, CDC, 2013)
- 1 in 5 middle school students who reported ever using e-cigarettes say they have never tried regular cigarettes. E-cigarettes could be an entry point to use of regular tobacco products, including cigarettes. (MMWR, CDC, 2013)

## What can parents do?

- Talk with your children before they begin smoking or using e-cigarettes, which is also called vaping. (Individuals who do not use tobacco before the age of 26 are likely to never start.) (Office of Adolescent Health, 2013)
- Talk to your children about the health risks of regular cigarettes and e-cigarettes. (Young people who see tobacco use as less harmful are more likely to start using tobacco.) (Office of Adolescent Health, 2013)
- Talk to your children about your expectations, such as how you strongly disapprove of their using tobacco. This can lessen a teen's risks of smoking or vaping. (Office of Adolescent Health, 2013)
- Adolescents raised in authoritative households have been shown to engage in fewer risky behaviors, such as smoking, than adolescents from non-authoritative families. (Latin American Journal of Nursing, 2008)
- Talk to your children about e-cigarette ads they see in the movies, internet, and on TV, or hear about on the radio. Use this as a chance to talk to your children about the health effects of smoking or vaping. (Office of Adolescent Health, 2013)

**Do you or someone you know want to quit smoking?**

**FREE HELP is available by calling  
1-866-NEW-LUNG (1-866-639-5864)**

## ***Are there any health effects from using e-cigarettes?***

- Some e-cigarette brands claim they do not contain nicotine, but when tested, they have been found to contain some levels of nicotine. *(FDA, 2010)*
- Nicotine is the addictive chemical that makes it hard to quit smoking. *(FDA, 2013)*
- Some e-cigarettes have also been found to contain a chemical called diethylene glycol, a toxic chemical used in antifreeze. *(FDA, 2013)*
- Other samples have been found to contain some of the same cancer-causing chemicals that are in regular cigarettes. *(FDA, 2013)*
- At this time, there are some known short-term health effects, but we do not know if there are long-term health effects.
- While the flavorings found in e-cigarettes are safe to consume, inhaling them may be harmful. Some of the flavorings have even been shown to be toxic.
- There is no proof that e-cigarettes are safe for those who smoke or for those who breathe in the vapor. *(FDA, 2013)*
- E-cigarettes are not an approved tool for quitting smoking. *(FDA, 2010)*
- Currently, e-cigarettes are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), so the safety and the purity of the devices are unknown.