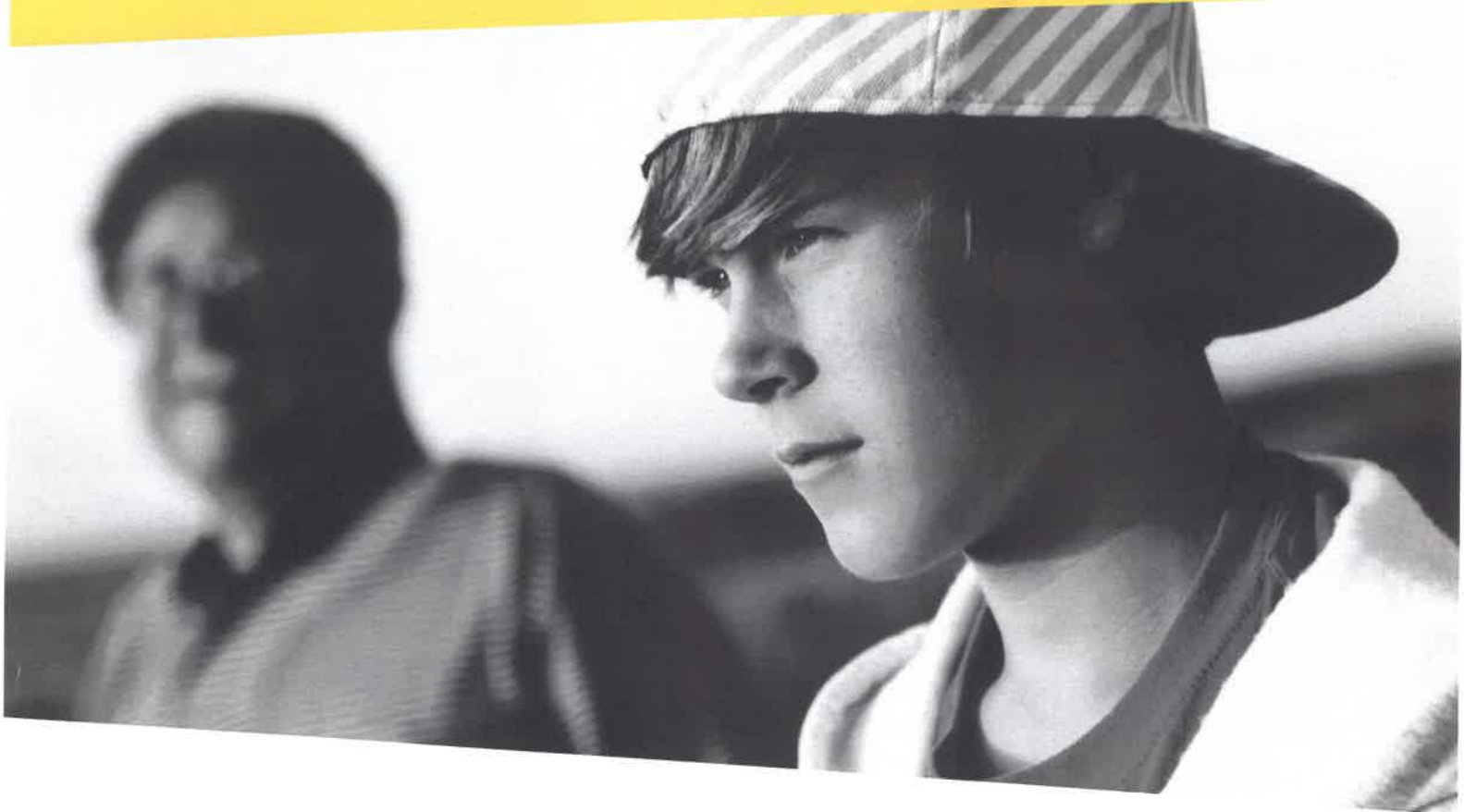




Talk with Your Teen About E-cigarettes: A Tip Sheet for Parents



BEFORE THE TALK

Know the facts.

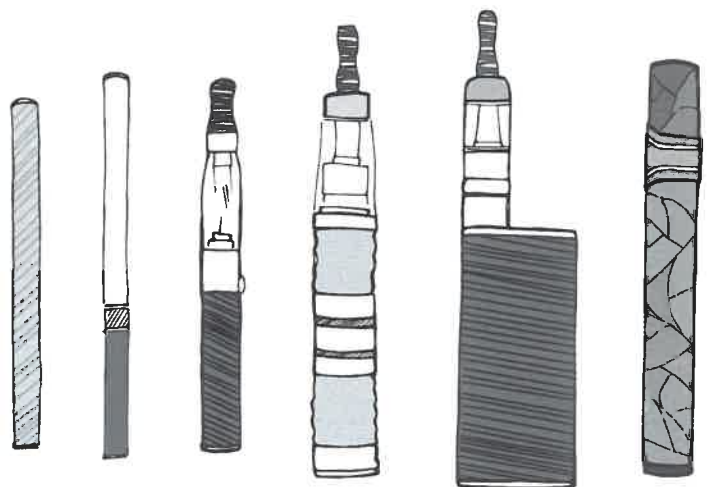
- Get credible information about e-cigarettes and young people at E-cigarettes.SurgeonGeneral.gov.

Be patient and ready to listen.

- Avoid criticism and encourage an open dialogue.
- Remember, your goal is to have a conversation, not to deliver a lecture.
- It's OK for your conversation to take place over time, in bits and pieces.

Set a positive example by being tobacco-free.

- If you use tobacco, it's never too late to quit. For free help, visit smokefree.gov or call **1-800-QUIT-NOW**.



START THE CONVERSATION

Find the right moment.

- A more natural discussion will increase the likelihood that your teen will listen. Rather than saying “we need to talk,” you might ask your teen what he or she thinks about a situation you witness together, such as:
 - » Seeing someone use an e-cigarette in person or in a video.
 - » Passing an e-cigarette shop when you are walking or driving.
 - » Seeing an e-cigarette advertisement in a store or magazine or on the internet.



Ask for support.

- Not sure where to begin? Ask your health care provider to talk to your teen about the risks of e-cigarettes.
- You might also suggest that your teen talk with other trusted adults, such as relatives, teachers, faith leaders, coaches, or counselors whom you know are aware of the risks of e-cigarettes.
- These supportive adults can help reinforce your message as a parent.

ANSWER THEIR QUESTIONS

Here are some questions and comments you might get from your teen about e-cigarettes and some ideas about how you can answer them.

Why don't you want me to use e-cigarettes?

- Science shows that e-cigarettes contain ingredients that are addictive and could harm different parts of your body.
- Right now, your brain is still developing, which means you are more vulnerable to addiction. Many e-cigarettes contain nicotine, and using nicotine can change your brain to make you crave more nicotine. It can also affect your memory and concentration. I don't want that for you!
- E-cigarettes contain chemicals that are harmful. When people use e-cigarettes, they breathe in tiny particles that can harm their lungs.

- The cloud that people exhale from e-cigarettes can expose you to chemicals that are not safe to breathe.

What's the big deal about nicotine?

- Your brain is still developing until about age 25. The Surgeon General reported that nicotine is addictive and can harm your brain development.
- Using nicotine at your age may make it harder for you to concentrate, learn, or control your impulses.
- Nicotine can even train your brain to be more easily addicted to other drugs like meth and cocaine.

- I don't say this to scare you, but I want you to have the facts because nothing is more important to me than your health and safety.

Aren't e-cigarettes safer than conventional cigarettes?

- Because your brain is still developing, scientific studies show that it isn't safe for you to use any tobacco product that contains nicotine, including e-cigarettes.
- Whether you get nicotine from an e-cigarette or a cigarette, it's still risky.
- Some e-cigarette batteries have even exploded and hurt people.

I thought e-cigarettes didn't have nicotine – just water and flavoring?

- I used to think that too. But many e-cigarettes have nicotine. There are also other chemicals in them that can be harmful.
- Let's look at the Surgeon General's website on e-cigarettes (E-cigarettes.SurgeonGeneral.gov) together so you can see for yourself.

I (or my friends) have tried e-cigarettes and it was no big deal.

- I appreciate your honesty. In the future, I hope you (or your friends) will stay away from e-cigarettes and other tobacco products, including cigarettes. Science shows that e-cigarettes contain ingredients that are addictive and could harm different parts of your body.
- Next time we go to the doctor, let's ask about the risks of nicotine, e-cigarettes, and other tobacco products.

You used tobacco, so why shouldn't I?

- If I could live my life over again, I never would have started smoking. I learned that people who smoke cigarettes are much more likely to develop, and die from, certain diseases than people who don't smoke. This was really scary, so I quit smoking.
- Quitting was really hard, and I don't want you to go through that. The best thing is to not start at all.



KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

Many parents find that texting is a great way to reach their teens. Here are some suggestions for text messages that might catch your teen's attention. And, you can easily share pages of the website (E-cigarettes.SurgeonGeneral.gov) with your teen.



Share this page

Look for this symbol, click it, type in the message you want or use the message provided, and share with your teen via Facebook, Twitter, or email.

Connect and encourage.

- You always liked science. Check out the science about e-cigarettes and young people: **E-cigarettes.SurgeonGeneral.gov**
- Getting off nicotine is hard but I'm so happy I quit. Don't make that mistake and get addicted. Smoking and tobacco use, including using e-cigarettes, are unsafe for young people.

Remind and repeat.

- Most teenagers don't use e-cigarettes. E-cigarettes with nicotine can mess with your brain, and your brain is still developing until you are at least 25.
- You might be tempted by e-cigarette flavors, but inhaling certain flavorings that have been found in some e-cigarettes can be harmful.

Share facts and resources.

- Just learned that many e-cigarettes have nicotine in them. That's the drug that makes cigarettes so addictive. Nicotine can also mess with your brain development.
- Just saw a report from the Surgeon General that e-cigarettes can mess with how your brain develops and might even affect your mood and focus. Please don't use any products that contain nicotine.
- Hope none of your friends use e-cigarettes around you. Even breathing the cloud they exhale can expose you to nicotine and chemicals that can be dangerous to your health.



Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention
Office on Smoking
and Health



E-cigarettes and Youth: What Parents Need to Know



WHAT ARE E-CIGARETTES?

Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) are battery-powered devices that deliver nicotine, flavorings, and other ingredients to the user. Using e-cigarettes is sometimes called “vaping.” E-cigarettes do not create harmless “water vapor” – they create an aerosol that can contain harmful chemicals.

HOW MANY YOUTH ARE USING E-CIGARETTES?

- E-cigarettes have been the most commonly used tobacco product among U.S. youth since 2014.
- In 2020, CDC and FDA data showed that at least 3.6 million U.S. youth, including about 1 in 5 high school students and about 1 in 20 middle school students, used e-cigarettes in the past 30 days.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS FOR YOUTH?

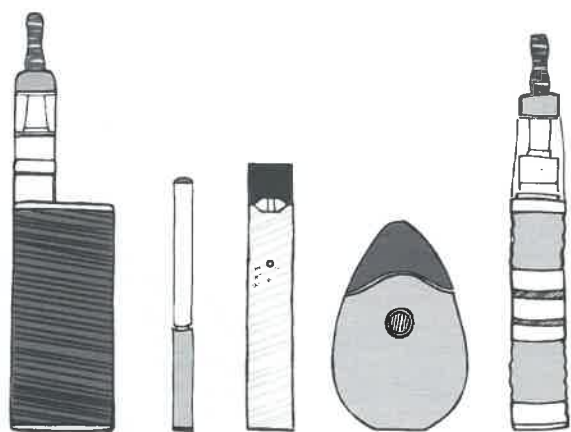
- Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, which is highly addictive. Nicotine exposure during adolescence can:
 - » Harm brain development, which continues until about age 25.
 - » Impact learning, memory, and attention.
 - » Increase risk for future addiction to other drugs.
- Young people who use e-cigarettes may be more likely to go on to use regular cigarettes.
- Many e-cigarettes come in kid-friendly flavors – including mango, fruit, and crème – which make e-cigarettes more appealing to young people.
- E-cigarette aerosol is not harmless. It can contain harmful substances, including:
 - » Nicotine
 - » Cancer-causing chemicals
 - » Volatile organic compounds
 - » Ultrafine particles
 - » Flavorings that have been linked to lung disease
 - » Heavy metals such as nickel, tin, and lead





WHAT DO E-CIGARETTES LOOK LIKE?

- E-cigarettes come in many shapes and sizes. Some look like regular cigarettes, cigars, or pipes. Larger e-cigarettes such as tank systems – or “mods” – do not look like other tobacco products.
- Some e-cigarettes look like other items commonly used by youth, such as pens and other everyday items. New e-cigarettes shaped like USB flash drives are popular among youth, including JUUL and the PAX Era, which looks like JUUL and delivers marijuana.



WHAT CAN YOU DO AS A PARENT OR CAREGIVER?

As a parent or caregiver, you have an important role in protecting children from e-cigarettes.

- » Talk to your child or teen about why e-cigarettes are harmful for them. It’s never too late.
- » Set a good example by being tobacco-free.
- » Learn about the different shapes and types of e-cigarettes and the risks of e-cigarette use for young people at [CDC.gov/e-cigarettes](https://www.cdc.gov/e-cigarettes).


ABOUT USB FLASH DRIVE-SHAPED E-CIGARETTES

As a parent or caregiver, you may have heard about the use of USB flash drive-shaped e-cigarettes, including JUUL (pronounced “jewel”). JUUL is the top-selling e-cigarette brand in the United States.

JUUL is being used by students in schools, including in classrooms and bathrooms. JUUL’s nicotine liquid refills are called “pods.” According to the manufacturer, a single JUUL pod can contain as much nicotine as a pack of 20 regular cigarettes.

JUUL delivers nicotine in a new form called “nicotine salts,” which can make it less harsh on the throat and easier to use by youth. JUUL also comes in flavors that can appeal to youth.





TEACHERS AND PARENTS: That USB Stick Might Be an *E-cigarette*



E-cigarettes are the most commonly used tobacco product among U.S. middle and high school students.



Some e-cigarettes don't look like tobacco products, so some kids use them unnoticed in schools, including in classrooms and bathrooms.



An increasingly popular e-cigarette, called JUUL, is shaped like a USB flash drive.



JUUL delivers a high dose of nicotine. Nicotine is highly addictive and can harm adolescent brain development.



TOBACCO PRODUCT USE IN ANY FORM, INCLUDING E-CIGARETTES, IS UNSAFE FOR YOUTH.

LEARN MORE about the risks of e-cigarettes for youth and access tips for talking to youth at:
<https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/resources.html>



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention