



Electric Cigarettes & Vaping

We have seen historic declines in alcohol use, binge drinking, and cigarette smoking among Florida's middle and high school students. Cigarette smoking is at an all-time low with only 2.5% of Floridians ages 12-17 currently smoking. However, e-cigarette use by youth has increased at an alarming rate. Although most (about 9 out of 10) students ages 11-17 haven't used electronic cigarettes in the last 30 days, there has been a massive 333.8% increase from 2012-2017. E-cigarettes are now the most commonly used tobacco product among youth. Although originally marketed to replace cigarettes and reduce the number of smokers, the data indicates vaping is actually creating more people addicted to nicotine and increasing the number of smokers.

WHAT ARE E-CIGARETTES OR VAPING?

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Electronic cigarettes, also known as "e-cigs," "vapes," "e-hookahs," "vape pens," and "electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS)" are battery-operated devices people use to inhale an aerosol. Vaping is the act of inhaling and exhaling the aerosol, often referred to as vapor. The e-liquid vaporized is not water and usually contains a propylene glycol or vegetable glycerin-based liquid, flavoring, metals, as well as other chemicals such as nicotine. Nicotine is the addictive drug derived from tobacco, therefore e-cigarettes are subject to the same government regulation requirements as regular cigarettes, chewing tobacco, and cigars. Purchasers, both in-store and online, must be at least 18 years of age and the penalty for minors using can be fines, community service, and the loss of a driver's license. People who use e-cigarettes to vape CBD oil with THC (the chemical in marijuana) instead of nicotine are committing a 2nd degree felony.

WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT THEM? THE FACTS ARE...

Scientists are still learning about the health effects of e-cigarettes, but here is what we know for a fact:

1. The e-cigarette aerosol is NOT harmless "water vapor." Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, heavy metals like lead, volatile organic compounds, cancer-causing agents, as well as chemicals found in regular cigarettes. Some of the aerosol's fine particles produced during the heating/vaporizing process are nickel, chromium, and cadmium, a toxic metal. These ingredients reach deep into lungs and have been linked to cancer, as well as respiratory and heart disease.

2. Nicotine is addictive and most e-cigarettes contain it. Did you know that the JUUL pod contains the same amount of nicotine as an entire pack of 20 cigarettes? Our brain goes through significant development during the teen and young adult years and doesn't stop growing until about age 25. Therefore, compared with older adults, the brain of youth and young adults is more vulnerable to nicotine addiction and its use to activate the brain's pleasure centers. Knowing this, it makes sense that studies show an association between e-cigarette smoking and the progression towards smoking cigarettes. Students who used e-cigarettes by the time they started 9th grade were more likely than others to start smoking cigarettes and other smokable tobacco products within the next year. Another study showed high school students who used e-cigarettes in the last month were about 7 times more likely to smoke cigarettes 6 months later, as compared to students who said they didn't use e-cigarettes. The Surgeon General reports using e-cigarettes and nicotine can even train your brain to be more easily addicted to other drugs such as cocaine and methamphetamine.

3. E-cigarettes can cause multiple health problems in addition to addiction. Upon entering the blood, nicotine stimulates the adrenal glands to release the hormone epinephrine (adrenaline). Epinephrine stimulates the central nervous system and increases blood pressure, breathing, and heart rate, which can increase anxiety levels. Nicotine affects the development of brain circuits that control memory, attention, concentration and learning so regular use can make it harder for you to concentrate, learn, control impulses, and can create mood disorders. Acute nicotine exposure can also be toxic. Children and adults have been poisoned by swallowing, breathing, or absorbing e-cigarette liquid.

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4. Much like tobacco companies, it is believed that e-cigarette companies are using “Predatory Marketing” to intentionally market harmful products to teens to get them hooked in order to have lifetime customers. While flavored regular cigarettes are banned, flavored e-cigs are still on the market with such child friendly names and flavors as One Mad Hit Juice Box, V’Nilla Cookies & Milk, and Unicorn Cakes.
5. E-cigarettes are not an FDA-approved quit aid, and there is no conclusive scientific evidence on their effectiveness for long-term smoking cessation. Research showed adult smokers in Europe who used e-cigarettes were LESS like to have stopped smoking than those that didn’t use e-cigarettes. Those that used e-cigarettes also smoked more cigarettes than those who didn’t.

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

Students

To prevent the potential problems caused by vaping or nicotine use, know how you will turn down the offer before it comes. Create a one-liner you feel comfortable saying to a friend, such as “no thanks, not my thing.” You can also suggest an alternate healthy activity or leave the area.

If you’re vaping - stop. The longer you ignore the facts and its effects, the more chances you take with your health and well-being. Find healthy replacement behaviors and learn how to live above the influence of negative ones at abovetheinfluence.com. If you need help in stopping, talk to your parents or another trusted adult, call SAMHSA’s National Helpline 1-800-662- HELP (4357), 1-800-QUIT-NOW, or visit www.smokefree.gov. These helplines can also be used to assist a friend seeking help. The sooner you acknowledge the problem, the better your chances are of overcoming it.

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Parents

Stay informed, know the risks, and don’t minimize the potential damage caused by e-cigarettes. Preventing your children’s tobacco use in any form is critical to keeping them nicotine addiction free. Get credible information at E-cigarettes.SurgeonGeneral.gov, The Partnership for Drug-Free Kids (drugfree.org), the Parents Toll-Free Helpline 1-855-DRUGFREE, the National Family Partnership (nfp.org), the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIH)’s site for parents (drugabuse.gov), or download the Electronic Cigarettes Toolkit (drugfreebroward.org) from the United Way of Broward County Commission on Substance Abuse.

Talk to your child about the risks of e-cigarette use for young people. Express firm expectations that they remain tobacco-free, but be patient and ready to listen so you have a discussion, not a lecture. Know the facts and the different shapes and types of e-cigarettes so you can recognize if your child is using. The vaping device can resemble traditional tobacco cigarettes, cigars, pipes, pens, USB memory sticks, or other everyday items.

You are the most important influence in your child’s life. Set a positive example by being tobacco-free and if you are already using these products, quit. Free help is available by calling 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visiting www.smokefree.gov. To find a local professional who specializes in addiction, dial 211 to reach Broward’s 211 First Call for Help information and referral hotline.

Teachers

Learn about the different shapes and types of e-cigarettes and the risks of e-cigarette use for young people. Enforce tobacco-free school policies. Reject youth tobacco prevention programs sponsored by the tobacco industry, instead use ones that are research based and proven.

Help your students learn healthy ways to cope with difficult feelings other than turning to drugs. Use Broward County’s Above the Influence Toolkit (browardschools.com/ati) or go to the national Above the Influence website (abovetheinfluence.com). Additional curriculum and resources can be found in the School Climate & Discipline Resources SharePoint or at HealthTeacher.com.

For more information, links and resources go to BrowardPrevention.org.

Sources: National Institute on Drug Abuse; National Institutes of Health; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Above the Influence abovetheinfluence.com. SAMHSA Tips for Teens <http://store.samhsa.gov>. CDC’s Youth Risk

Behavior Survey and Surveillance Report. Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey. Florida Youth Tobacco Survey.

7 Things ECig and Vaping Companies Don’t Want You to Know, United Way of Broward County Commission on Behavioral Health & Drug Prevention. E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults, A Report of the Surgeon General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.