

# Vaping and *your health*



## What are e-cigarettes?

E-cigarettes, also known as 'vapes', are **electronic devices** that heat a liquid (or 'juice') to create an aerosol that users **inhale**. Using an e-cigarette is commonly called '**vaping**'. E-cigarettes come in **all shapes and sizes** and can look like a highlighter, a pen or USB.

Some people mistakenly believe the 'cloud' from vaping is a vapour, like steam. It is really **an aerosol**, a fine spray of **chemicals** that enter the body via the lungs and small particles that can **lodge in the lungs**.

## What's inside an e-cigarette?

The short answer is '**no-one knows**', and that's a problem. An e-cigarette can contain **many different chemicals** – very few are identified and none have been tested to show they are safe to inhale. Some of the chemicals found in aerosols can **cause cancer**, others can **cause swelling** and **irritation in the throat** and **lungs** and can impact the **heart**.

Even though the packaging on an e-cigarette might say it doesn't contain nicotine, **most e-cigarettes in Australia are labelled wrongly and do actually contain nicotine**.



# How vaping affects your body

Vaping can cause significant harm to your body in the short and long term - even if you use non-nicotine e-cigarettes.

## Short-term:

- Vomiting
- Nausea
- Coughing
- Shortness of breath
- Mouth irritation

## Long-term:

- Lung damage
- Heart disease



E-cigarettes haven't been around long enough to know if they cause other diseases, but most experts think it is likely they will cause **lung** and **mouth cancers**.

**Other risks:** Nicotine is a **poison** and can make you really sick if it is swallowed accidentally. There have also been cases of e-cigarettes **exploding** and **catching fire**.



## How vaping can lead to addiction

- **Nicotine is a highly addictive** drug that can be found in e-cigarettes even when they're labelled 'nicotine-free'
- Some e-cigarettes have been shown to contain as much nicotine as a whole packet of cigarettes
- Your brain is still developing until you're 25
- Nicotine use **affects brain development**, especially the part responsible for attention, memory and learning
- Nicotine use can lead to **life-long issues**
- Nicotine **addiction happens really fast**, which makes it hard to stop vaping and increases the chance you'll start smoking cigarettes to get that nicotine 'hit'

