

# E-cigarette **fact sheet** for **parents** and **teachers**



## **E-cigarettes cause serious health risks to teens.**

Since the mid-2010s, there has been a **big rise in young people using e-cigarettes**, including teens who have never smoked. A Royal Children's Hospital 'Child Health Poll' found over half of parents have never talked about e-cigarettes with their teen. Social media is being used by tobacco and e-cigarette companies to **sell e-cigarettes to teens and young adults**.

### **About e-cigarettes**

E-cigarettes, also known as **'vapes'**, are electronic devices that **use batteries**. They work by heating a liquid until it becomes an aerosol that the user breathes in. Using an e-cigarette is commonly called 'vaping'. Some people think the **mist** from vaping is a vapour, like steam. It's not. It is really **an aerosol**, a fine spray of chemicals that enters the body through the lungs and small particles that can **get stuck in the lungs**.



# Fast facts

## 1 | Legality of e-cigarettes

- Buying an e-cigarette or liquid with nicotine in it is **illegal** in Australia unless the person has a doctor's prescription.
- Nicotine-containing e-cigarettes and liquids can only be sold to people with a **valid prescription** in pharmacies.
- In Victoria, e-cigarettes and liquids that don't contain nicotine can be sold in shops, but it is **illegal to sell them to a person under 18 years old**.

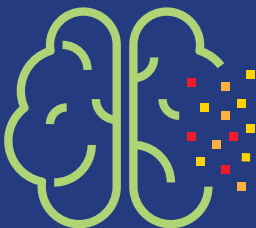
## 2 | Safety

- Most e-cigarettes and e-liquids that don't show nicotine on their label in Australia **do, in fact, have nicotine**.
- There are **no quality or safety standards** for e-cigarettes or nicotine-free liquids, meaning their make, ingredients and labels are not regulated or checked.
- E-cigarettes can **explode** or catch fire.
- E-cigarette liquids can cause poisoning if swallowed.



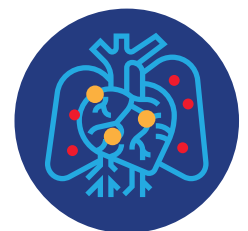
## 3 | Detecting e-cigarette use

- E-cigarettes come in all shapes and sizes. They can look like a **highlighter**, a **pen** or **USB**. Some can be **disposable**, and some are small enough to fit into a pocket or a pencil case. An e-cigarette device can be identified by taking the cap off the item to see if it has a mouthpiece.
- Not all e-cigarettes release an aerosol that can be seen. The easiest way to detect e-cigarette use is if there is an **unexpected smell in the air** from e-cigarette flavouring. Teens tend to use fruit or sweet flavours, so this scent is usually sweet.



## 4 | Harms of e-cigarettes

- Nicotine **harms the way teenage brains grow**, which may affect memory and concentration.
- Teens become more easily and **rapidly addicted to nicotine** than adults, and those who use e-cigarettes are more likely to start smoking cigarettes.
- The short-term health effects of e-cigarette use can include vomiting, nausea, and lung injury.
- The long-term health effects are not yet known; however long-term impacts could include an increased risk of **cancer, heart disease, or lung disease**.
- It is the wide range of chemicals, regardless of nicotine content, that likely cause harm.



For more information visit [quit.org.au/teenvaping](https://quit.org.au/teenvaping)