

# 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?

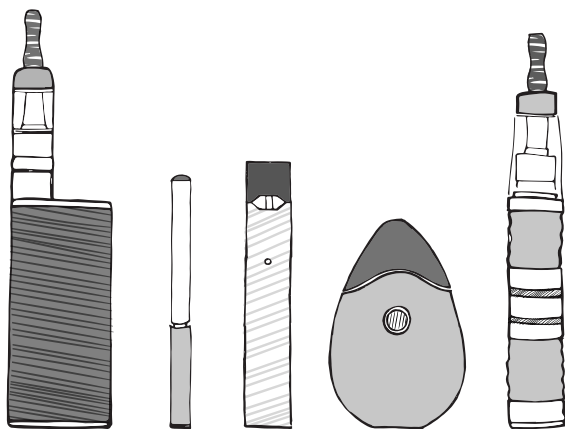
- Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, which is highly addictive. Nicotine exposure during adolescence can:
  - » Harm brain development, which continues until about age 25.
  - » Impact learning, memory, and attention.
  - » Increase risk for future addiction to other drugs.
- Young people who use e-cigarettes 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.

