

UNDERSTAND YOUTH VAPING AND START A CONVERSATION WITH YOUR KIDS



Why it's important to talk to your kids about vaping.

Talking to your kids about vaping is crucial because it helps them understand the health risks and social implications associated with using these products. It's never too young to start a conversation with your child and set your expectations.

By having open, honest conversations, parents can dispel myths, provide accurate information, and encourage critical thinking. This proactive approach empowers children to make informed decisions, resist peer pressure, and develop healthy habits that will benefit them throughout their lives.

The information provided in this resource will help prepare you to start the conversation with your child at any time.

HOW TO OPEN THE CONVERSATION

- When you speak with your child offer more guidance and information.
- Share what you've learned about vaping, like the dangers of nicotine addiction and the harmful chemicals. Voice your concerns about how vaping companies target kids with their advertising.
- Ask your child what they would do if someone asked them to vape and offer suggestions on how to say no.
- Always encourage them to be their own person, make their own decisions, and not cave into peer pressure. Remind them that all decisions have consequences.

CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

Now that you understand more about vaping, look for more opportunities to bring it up in conversation. Your conversations should be ongoing... as long as e-cigarettes and vapes are still available on the market.

Share new information as you hear about it and encourage them to make the decision based on all the reasons you've talked about.

And always find ways to build their confidence by highlighting their skills and personal strengths.



IS IT WORTH IT?

Vaping can affect more than just your child's health. It can keep them from doing what they love and prevent them from reaching their goals.

There's nothing pretty about vaping

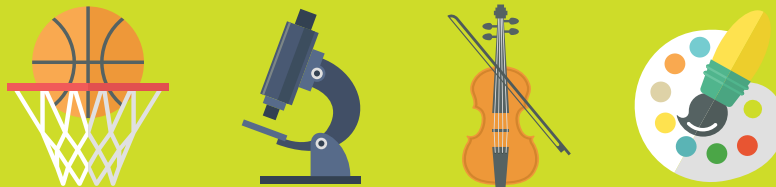
Vaping can affect the skin, causing redness, inflammation, dry skin and premature aging. Vaping has also been linked to dry mouth, bad breath, tooth decay and a buildup of dead skin cells on the tongue called "black, hairy tongue".



Vaping could put your child's extracurricular activities at risk

Many school and community sports teams and other clubs have a code of conduct for participants. Being caught vaping may be a violation, and it could lead to your child being suspended or removed from the team or activity.

If your child is on a team or in a club that has a participant code of conduct, review the code with your child. Consider speaking to a leader, coach or team manager if it's unclear if vaping violates the code.



Vaping could cost your child big bucks

Vaping and the sale of vaping products are subject to many of the same restrictions as tobacco products. In most provinces and territories, vaping is banned on school grounds, on restaurant patios, in indoor public spaces and in private vehicles when minors are present.

Being caught vaping where it isn't allowed could mean fines of hundreds of dollars.



Vaping waste is terrible for the environment

If your child is passionate about the environment, they should be aware that vaping has serious environmental consequences.

Throwing away a vaping device means throwing away hazardous waste, electronic waste and single-use plastic waste all at the same time.

Hazardous waste - Nicotine salts and heavy metals, like nickel, cadmium, lead and mercury can leach into water and soil.

Electronic waste - Lithium in the batteries is a finite resource that could be used to create batteries for electric cars or e-bikes. It's also flammable, and discarded vapes have caused fires in garbage bins and at waste facilities.

Single-use plastic waste - The plastic components of vaping devices eventually break down into microplastics, which can accumulate in and damage cells of living organisms.



Help them find alternatives to vaping

Things to do when they are stressed or bored:

- ✓ **Distraction tools** such as fidget toys or games on their phone.
- ✓ **A new hobby** such as crochet or guitar.
- ✓ **Physical activity/Sports.**



Ways to manage their mood without vaping:

- ✓ **Deep breathing exercises**
- ✓ **Journaling**
- ✓ **Talking it out**
- ✓ **Get them help if you suspect they are vaping**



CONVERSATION STARTERS AND RESPONSES

If you're uncertain about how to discuss vaping with your kids, these sample conversation starters can help.

These tips are provided by Protect Kids Fight Flavored E-Cigs.

Here are ways to get the conversation started. Open conversations with a question to gauge how much your child knows.

- "I saw something on social media about vaping. Do you know what vaping is?"
- "Do you think some kids pressure other kids to convince them to vape?"
- "I heard that a parent at school found a vaping device, and it made me wonder: Do you know what an e-cigarette looks like?"



Your child's responses will be the heart of the conversation and guide you to where you need to be.

If your child tells you that their friends are asking them to try vaping.

Possible responses might be:

- "Thank you for sharing that with me. It is normal to want to feel like you fit in."
- "You can try being firm and say, "No thanks, I'm good." But I know that is sometimes easier said than done."
- "It helps if you're not alone. Find someone else in your group who can say no, it will help to have a friend by your side"
- Let them know it's okay to remove themselves from a situation if they feel pressured.

If your child says that they think vaping isn't bad for you, share a few facts with them:

Possible responses might be:

- "This isn't just harmless water vapor. It's an aerosol of nicotine, propylene glycol, solvents, chemical flavorings, and more. They're not well-regulated, so we don't even know everything that's in them. Putting unknown chemicals and particles deep into your lungs is not safe or healthy."
- "E-cigarettes contain nicotine just like regular cigarettes, which is why they're highly addictive."
- "One vape often contains as much nicotine as an entire pack of cigarettes – or more."
- "Nicotine harms your brain. It can affect your memory and concentration, training your brain to be more easily addicted to other drugs."

If your child points out that e-cigarettes seem harmless because they come in candy flavors, let them know:

Possible responses might be:

- "That's because the vape companies are using flavors that appeal to kids so they'll try them and get addicted."
- "Tobacco companies have been luring kids with all kinds of flavored products for decades. Flavors just make it easier to start."

If your child says, "You smoke/vape, why shouldn't I?"

Possible responses might be:

- "I've made plenty of mistakes and I'm learning from them every day. I'm hoping you won't make those same mistakes."
- "I should have never started smoking/vaping. Quitting was really hard, and I don't want you to go through that. And I'm afraid of what kind of damage I've done to my body."
- "Quitting is really hard and I haven't been able to do it. I don't want you to have to go through that someday."

Be ready to hear that your child may have tried a vape. A much higher percentage of kids have tried vaping than most parents recognize.

- Make sure to start by thanking them for being honest. This is key for continuing an open conversation and relationship of trust.
- Explain that your motivation is protecting and caring for them. “I want you to know how much I appreciate your honesty. I’m concerned because I care about you and your health.”

Remind your kid that you are both on the same side when it comes to Big Tobacco.

- Your child is the target of Big Tobacco advertising, devised to intentionally hook a young audience on nicotine, and make them customers for life. The same companies who funded and promoted cancer-causing cigarettes are the same ones behind many vape products.
- Do you know why JUUL pods and other e-cigarettes come in fruity flavors? They were intentionally created to hook kids.

Talk about why people vape

- Some people vape because they’re curious, but nicotine is addictive and trying it a few times could get you hooked.
- Some people vape when they are stressed, but there are healthier ways to cope with stress. Youth vaping has also been linked to mental health symptoms, such as depression.

Ask questions about what your child is hearing, seeing, or has learned about vaping.



Additional tools to guide your conversation with your child

- **Smoke-Free Paso Del Norte YouTube Channel**
- **VapeFreePDN.org**
- **Text QUIT to 4788 for free advice, tips and inspiration on ways to help your kids quit vaping.**
- **Parents, help your teen quit vaping. Have them text "DITCHVAPE" to 88709 to join for free and receive advice, tips, and tricks on ways to quit.**

CITATIONS

- Prevent vaping: A smoke free paso del norte. Smoke Free Paso del Norte . (n.d.).
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- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). What you can do to protect youth from the harms of Vaping. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
 - Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/tobacco-features/back-to-school.html#:~:text=Youth%20might%20turn%20to%20vaping,be%20a%20source%20of%20stress.>

A Smoke-Free Paso del Norte is an initiative of the Paso del Norte Health Foundation that uses a comprehensive and coordinated approach to prevent youth vaping and tobacco use as well as providing help for tobacco users to quit.