

Fact Sheet: What registered nurses (RNs) and nurse practitioners (NPs) need to know about vaping

Vaping devices are commonly used to quit smoking but also used for recreational smoking (Center on Addiction, 2018). They have been perceived as “risk free”, however the safety of these devices is questionable and unclear (Essenmacher et al., 2018). This document is intended to inform RNs and NPs about vaping and provide them with helpful resources to help them better inform members of the public and promote healthy public outcomes.

What is vaping?

Vaping is the act of inhaling and exhaling an aerosol produced by a vaping product, such as an electronic cigarette. Vaping doesn't require burning like cigarette smoking. The device heats a liquid into a vapour, which then turns into aerosol. This vapour is often flavoured and can contain nicotine (Government of Canada [GC], 2019a). For more information, refer to the following link: [About Vaping](#).

Vaping: what is known?

Here are quick facts from Health Canada (2019):

- Vaping devices can lead to nicotine addiction by delivering nicotine to users' brains, making them crave it more and more. It can also increase exposure to harmful chemicals and metals. The exposure to these harmful chemicals can affect brain development in teens.
- There are health risks linked to other components in vaping products, including harmful metals such as nickel, tin and aluminum, and harmful chemicals, such as formaldehyde and acrolein.
- We are still learning about how vaping affects health. The long-term health impacts of vaping are unknown.
- According to the [Canadian Student Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs Survey](#), in 2016-17, 10% of students in grades 7 to 12 (secondary I to V in Quebec) reported having used an e-cigarette in the past 30 days, an increase from 6% in 2014-15.

What are the risks of vaping?

Vaping can increase exposure to chemicals that could harm the health of people by causing lung damage. Findings from an investigation into lung injuries associated with e-cigarette use, or vaping, suggest THC products play a role in the outbreak. Evidence indicates that 77% of the people involved in the outbreak reported using THC-containing products or both THC-containing products and nicotine-containing products (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019). Vaping could also expose the person to nicotine, which is addictive (GC, 2019b). For more information on the risks of vaping, refer to the following link: [Risks of Vaping](#)

What can RNs and NPs do?

RNs and NPs must become involved in educating the public, especially adolescents and their parents, about the dangers of vaping (Thomas, 2019). Here are some helpful resources for RNs and NPs:

GC: [Information Update-Health Canada Warns of Potential Risk of Pulmonary Illness Associated with Vaping Products](#)

GC: [About Vaping](#)

GC: [Consider the Consequences of Vaping](#)

GC: [Health Canada Proposes Stricter Advertising Rules to Tackle Youth Vaping](#)

Canadian Lung Association: [Vaping](#)

NB Anti-Tobacco Coalition: [E-Cigarettes, Vaping Products and Flavoured Tobacco](#)

Center on Addiction: [Recreational Vaping](#) (Only available in English)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Quick Facts on the Risks of E-cigarettes for Kids, Teens and Young Adults](#) (Only available in English)

References

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