

WHY

VAPING

IS NOT COOL



AWAWARENESS BOOKLET FOR STUDENTS

BE INFORMED. BREATHE FREE. CLEAR AIR. CLEAR MIND. YOUR HEALTH, YOUR CHOICE. STAY VAPE-FREE



GUYANA DRUG INFORMATION NETWORK
CUSTOMS ANTI NARCOTIC UNIT



VAPING AWARENESS BOOKLET FOR STUDENTS

Know the facts. Protect your health. Make informed choices.

WHY THIS BOOKLET MATTERS

Vaping: What You Really Need to Know

These days, vaping is everywhere on TikTok, at school, and even in music videos. It's often made to look trendy, harmless, and even fun. But behind the flavoured clouds and sleek devices is a truth that many people don't talk about: **“vaping can seriously harm your health”**.

This booklet, an initiative of The National Drug Authority, “The Customs Anti Narcotic Unit” is here to give you the facts. Not rumours, not hype, just the truth. Whether you've already tried vaping, are feeling pressure from friends, or just want to understand what all the talk is about, you're in the right place. We'll break down what's actually inside a vape, how it affects your lungs, brain, and mood, and what addiction really looks like.

You'll also learn how vaping targets young people with flavours and ads, why saying “no” isn't always easy, but why it matters, and where to get support if you or someone you know is trying to quit.

Your health, your future, and your choices matter. This guide will help you see through the smoke and make informed decisions that protect you today and tomorrow.



WHAT IS VAPING?

What Is Vaping, Really?

Vaping is when someone inhales a mist (called aerosol) made by an electronic device like a vape pen, e-cigarette, or pod system. These devices heat a liquid called e-juice or vape juice until it becomes a vapour you breathe into your lungs. It might smell like candy or fruit, but don't be fooled, this mist often contains nicotine, flavouring chemicals, and other harmful substances.

There are different kinds of vapes out there. Some are disposable and made for one-time use; once the liquid or battery runs out, they're tossed away. Others can be recharged and refilled using pre-filled cartridges or bottles of e-liquid that you pour in yourself. They come in many shapes and sizes, but they all work in the same basic way, creating a vapour you inhale.



Most vape liquids contain nicotine, which is highly addictive, especially for teens. It can mess with how your brain works, making it harder to concentrate, control your emotions, or handle stress. And even if a vape is labelled “nicotine-free,” many still test positive for nicotine, which can be misleading.

Some vapes even contain THC, the chemical in marijuana that causes a high, or other unknown drugs. Not all ingredients are listed, and many vapes are made illegally, so you might not know what you're putting in your body.

Why Vaping Is Risky

Even if it doesn't seem dangerous at first, vaping can cause serious health problems over time. It can lead to lung injuries, breathing issues, chest pain, and even mental health struggles like anxiety and mood swings. It's not just “water vapour”, it's a mix of chemicals that can damage your body.

Think Before You Puff

Vaping might seem cool or harmless because of the flavours, the ads, or what your friends say. But behind the scenes, it's a lot riskier than it looks. Once you start, it's hard to stop. So, before you hit that vape, think about what you're putting into your body, and whether it's worth the risk to your health.

WHY VAPING IS DANGEROUS

You might hear that vaping is “better than smoking,” but that doesn’t mean it’s safe. Here’s what vaping can do to your body and mind:

It Gets You Hooked – Fast

Most vapes have nicotine, which is super addictive, especially for teens. It messes with the parts of your brain that control focus, memory, and decision-making. Once you're hooked, it can be hard to stop.

It Can Damage Your Lungs

Vaping can cause a serious lung illness called EVALI. People have ended up in the hospital with chest pain, trouble breathing, and lung damage from vaping.

It Affects Your Heart

Vaping speeds up your heart rate and blood pressure, putting extra stress on your heart, even if you’re young and healthy.

It Can Mess with Your Mood

Vaping is linked to anxiety, mood swings, and depression. It might feel like it helps you relax at first, but over time, it can actually make your mental health worse.

You Don’t Know What’s in It

Vapes can contain toxic metals like lead or tin, and some even have THC or other hidden drugs. You can’t always tell what you're inhaling, and that makes vaping even riskier.

EXPLORING THE HEALTH ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH VAPING



Vaping might look harmless, especially with all the sweet flavours and cool ads, but the truth is, it can seriously mess with your body and mind. A lot of people don't realise that vapes are filled with chemicals that can damage your lungs, heart, and brain. It's not just "water vapour", it's a mix of stuff that can cause real health problems over time.

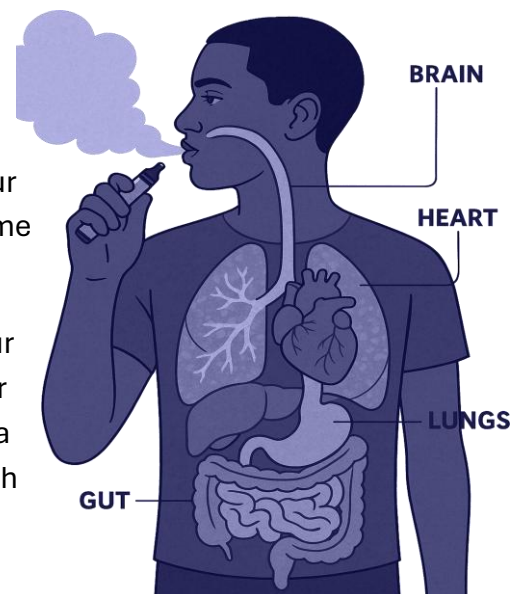
Whether you've tried vaping, been curious, or wanted to know the facts, learning about these risks is smart. Your health matters, and knowing the truth helps you stay in control and make better choices for your future.

Vaping can cause several health issues. In this chapter, we will outline some of the associated issues.

What Happens to Your Body When You Vape

When you vape, the nicotine in the e-liquid gets into your body really fast. As soon as you inhale, it travels from your lungs into your bloodstream, and things start to change quickly. Nicotine causes your body to release a chemical called adrenaline, which is the same hormone your body makes when you're nervous or stressed.

This rush of adrenaline can make your heartbeat faster, raise your blood pressure, and make you breathe faster too. It's like putting your body in "emergency mode" for no real reason. Over time, this extra stress on your heart can raise your chances of having serious health problems, like a heart attack, especially if you keep vaping regularly.



Some people say they feel more alert after vaping, but that "buzz" doesn't last, and it can come with some unpleasant side effects. For example, you might feel jittery or anxious and start to cough more often as your lungs react to the chemicals in the vapour.

And if you're vaping marijuana, things can get even riskier. Vaping cannabis gives you a stronger high than smoking it. That might sound like a bonus, but it also means you're more likely to feel anxious, have a racing heart, or even experience panic attacks. Plus, vaping cannabis can make your eyes and mouth super dry, and it's harder to control how much you're taking in.

Bottom line? Whether it's nicotine or marijuana, vaping messes with your heart, lungs, and brain in ways you might not feel right away, but the damage builds up. Protect your heart and health now, so you don't have to deal with major issues later.

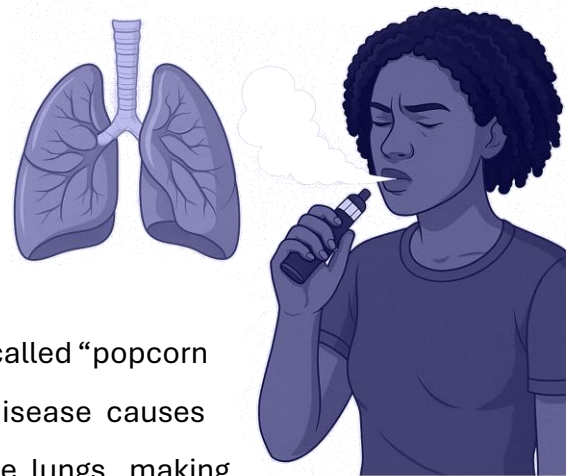
Vaping and the Lung: What's Really Going On

When you vape, you're not just inhaling flavoured mist. Tiny particles in the vapour travel deep into your lungs and settle in your airways. Once they're in there, these chemicals can cause inflammation, kill healthy cells, leave scars, and even damage your DNA. That might sound extreme, but it's real.

One of doctors' biggest concerns is the flavouring chemicals used in e-juice. Some of these are linked to a serious condition called "popcorn lung" (the medical name is bronchiolitis obliterans). This disease causes swelling and permanent scarring in the small airways of the lungs, making breathing harder over time.

If you vape, you might notice coughing or wheezing. And if you already have asthma, vaping can make it worse. Scientists also believe that the chemicals in vape juice, like acrolein, which is used to kill weeds, can lead to major health problems like COPD (a serious lung disease) and even lung cancer.

Experts are now linking vaping to chronic bronchitis, a long-term illness that affects your ability to breathe normally. Chronic bronchitis happens when the lining of your airways becomes inflamed and stays that way for a long time. It causes you to cough a lot, produce thick mucus, and feel like you can't catch your breath. It's a type of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and it doesn't just go away, it keeps coming back and can get worse over time.

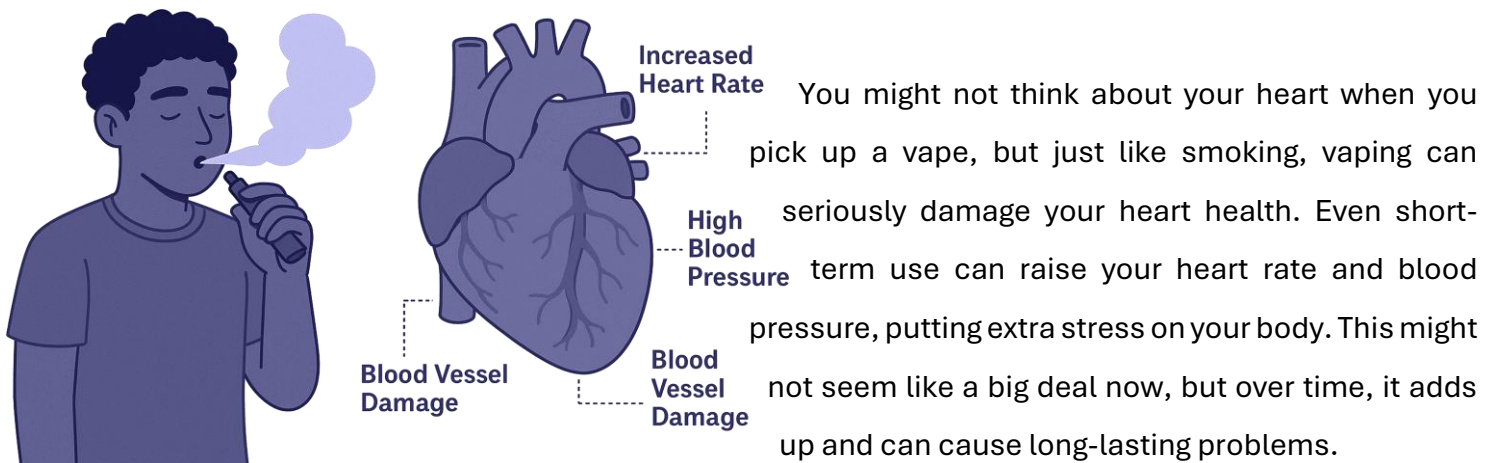


That's not all. Vapes have been found to contain other toxic chemicals, too, like chlorine, which is used in disinfectants. These aren't things your lungs should ever have to deal with.

In places like New South Wales, Australia, doctors have already seen teens and adults who vape end up in hospitals with severe breathing problems and lung damage. So, while vaping might seem harmless at first, it can lead to long-term lung issues that you don't want to face later in life.

Doctors and lung experts in NSW have seen people who vape needing hospital treatment for breathing issues and lung damage.

How Vaping Affects Your Heart



One of the first things that happens when you vape is damage to your blood vessels. The chemicals in vape liquid harm the lining of your arteries, making them stiff and less flexible. This limits blood flow and increases your risk of heart disease. Vaping also causes inflammation and oxidative stress, two things that mess with your heart and raise your chances of developing heart-related issues.

Over the long run, vaping is linked to an increased risk of heart failure, especially for people who vape often. It can also lead to atherosclerosis, when plaque builds up inside your arteries. This blocks blood from reaching important parts of your body and can lead to heart attacks or strokes. Some teens who vape may also notice they can't exercise or get tired more easily, because their heart and lungs aren't working efficiently.

And it's not just nicotine you have to worry about. Vaping marijuana also raises your heart rate, making your heart work even harder. If you're around people who vape, you can still breathe in the chemicals from their vapour, which means even secondhand vaping can be harmful.

The bottom line is that vaping affects your lungs and puts your heart at risk. Protecting your heart now means a healthier life later.

Vaping and Your Immune System: Why It Puts You at Risk



You might think vaping only affects your lungs, but did you know it can actually weaken your immune system, too? Your immune system is your body's defence squad—it protects you from getting sick. But when you vape, it becomes much harder for your body to fight off germs and infections (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2022).

Studies show that the chemicals in e-cigarette vapour interfere with neutrophils, a type of white blood cell that acts like your immune system's front-line soldiers. Vaping reduces their ability to attack harmful bacteria and viruses, making you more vulnerable to illness (Reidel et al., 2018).

Vaping also messes with how your body responds to infections in your lungs and airways. It can suppress immune genes and cause inflammation, which damages lung tissue and weakens your body's natural defence system (Chatterjee et al., 2020).

Even more alarming, vaping has been shown to alter gene expression in lung cells, which may lead to long-term respiratory problems and more frequent infections, especially for people with asthma or pre-existing lung conditions (Ghosh et al., 2019).

When your immune system is compromised, you're more likely to catch viruses like the flu, RSV, or other lung infections, which can be more severe than usual. Both nicotine and marijuana have been shown to

impair immune function, and vaping either one only makes it worse (National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA], 2023).

Bottom line: If you want to stay healthy and keep your immune system strong, ditching vaping is one of the smartest moves you can make.

Vaping and Your Brain: Why It Hits Harder When You're Young

Your brain is still developing, and it doesn't fully mature until around your mid-20s. During the teenage years, the brain is especially sensitive to chemicals, particularly nicotine, one of the main substances found in most vapes (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2023).

Nicotine affects areas of the brain responsible for learning, memory, attention, and emotional regulation. This can make it harder to focus in class, retain information, and manage stress. Long-term use may cause lasting changes in brain function (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016).

Vaping also interferes with the brain's reward system by altering how it processes pleasure and motivation. Over time, this can lead to dependency not just on nicotine, but also on other addictive substances (National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA], 2022).

Emerging research has also found links between nicotine use and mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and increased risk of developing schizophrenia (Johns Hopkins Medicine, 2023). While vaping may feel like a way to reduce stress, it can worsen mental health over time. Since the brain is still growing, vaping during adolescence can result in permanent neurological damage. Staying vape-free supports brain development and helps maintain focus, energy, and emotional balance, critical for succeeding in school, sports, and life.



Vaping and Your Risk of Cancer: Here's What You Should Know



You've probably heard people say that vaping is "better than smoking." But that doesn't mean it's safe, especially when it comes to something as serious as cancer. Health experts are now raising red flags about how vaping might increase your risk of developing cancer later in life. Why? Because vape aerosol—the mist you breathe in—contains toxic chemicals that are known to cause cancer in humans (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2022).

When you take a puff from a vape, you're not just inhaling flavoured vapour. You're also breathing in dangerous substances like arsenic, benzene, formaldehyde, cadmium, and acrolein (U.S. Surgeon General, 2016). These are the same chemicals found in industrial cleaners, car exhaust, and even pesticides. Many of them are officially labelled as carcinogens, which means they're known to cause cancer.

For example:

- Formaldehyde is used to preserve dead bodies.
- Benzene is found in gasoline.
- Cadmium is a toxic metal used in batteries.
- These substances aren't meant to be in your lungs or anywhere in your body.

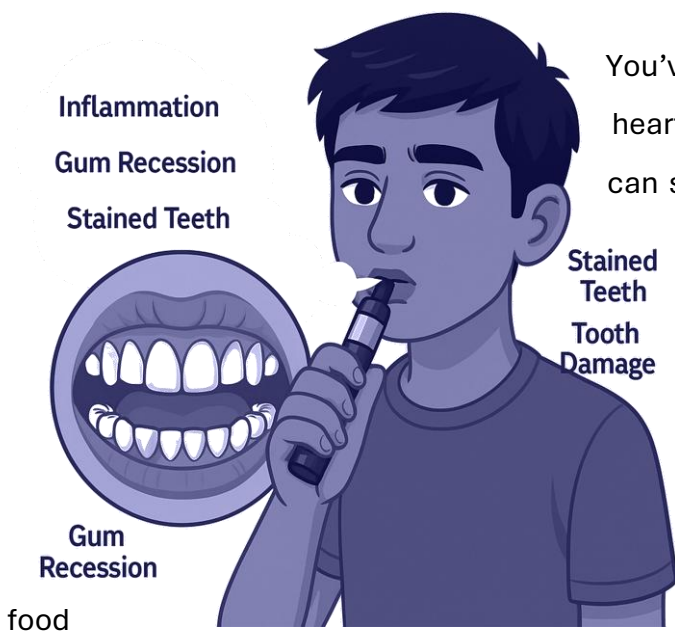
Recent studies have also shown that people who vape display early signs of cell damage, especially in areas like the lungs and mouth. Researchers have found that vaping can alter DNA methylation patterns, which affect how your cells grow and repair themselves (Staudt et al., 2018). When cells don't function properly, it opens the door to diseases like cancer.

Even if you don't feel anything wrong right now, damage from vaping can build up slowly over time with each puff. And during your teen years, when your body, including your lungs and immune system, is still developing, those harmful chemicals have an even greater chance of doing long-term harm.

Plus, the earlier you start vaping, the longer you're exposed to cancer-causing chemicals, increasing your risk (National Cancer Institute [NCI], 2023). While scientists are still studying the full long-term effects of vaping, one thing is already clear: the warning signs are there.

Vaping might seem trendy or chill in the moment, but it's not worth the risk of breathing in toxic chemicals that could lead to cancer. Protect your health. Protect your future. Think twice before you vape.

Vaping and Your Smile: What It Does to Your Teeth and Gums



You've probably heard that vaping affects your lungs or heart—but what about your mouth? Believe it or not, vaping can seriously harm your teeth and gums, even if you brush every day.

When you vape, the chemicals in the vapour don't just go into your lungs; they pass right through your mouth first. That's where the damage starts. E-cigarette aerosol can dry out your mouth, and when there's not enough saliva, your mouth can't properly wash away particles and bacteria. This dry environment helps

plaque build up, which leads to cavities and gum disease (National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research [NIDCR], 2022).

People who vape are also more likely to develop periodontal disease, especially periodontitis—a serious gum infection that causes the gums to pull away from your teeth, creating deep pockets where bacteria thrive. Over time, this can lead to swollen, bleeding gums, persistent bad breath, and even tooth loss (Wadia et al., 2021; American Dental Association [ADA], 2020).

Even the flavorings in e-liquids can do harm. Many sweet or sour vape flavours are acidic, and that acid wears down tooth enamel—the hard protective layer on your teeth. Once enamel is gone, it doesn't grow

back, and your teeth become more prone to sensitivity, decay, and cracking (World Health Organization [WHO], 2021).

Here's the real kicker: once gum disease or enamel erosion sets in, it's very hard to fix. Even dentists can only manage the damage—not reverse it. That's why protecting your mouth from vaping before the damage begins is so important. You only get one set of adult teeth—don't let vaping destroy your smile.

your teeth, gums, and fresh breath, you might want to keep that vape out of your mouth entirely.

Poison in Disguise: The Hidden Danger of Vape Liquids

WHAT IS IN A VAPE?

24 Cr Chromium 51.996	30 Zn Zinc 65.39
Chromium can cause inflammation, airway obstruction and lung, nasal and sinus cancer if taken in excess doses.	Zinc in excess may cause nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, stomach pains, headaches, and diarrhea.
28 Ni Nickel 58.693	82 Pb Lead 207.2
Nickel can lead to chronic bronchitis and reduced lung function.	Lead can cause fatal lead poisoning if too much builds up in the body.
25 Mn Manganese 54.938	
Manganese can harm the body in many ways if taken in excess, such as causing schizophrenia, dullness, weak muscles, headaches, Parkinson's, lung embolism, hallucinations, forgetfulness and nerve damage.	

Vape liquid might look harmless, just a colourful bottle with a sweet scent, but don't be fooled. That small container can pack a dangerous dose of nicotine, especially for young children. In fact, e-liquid is considered poisonous, even in small amounts, if it's swallowed, spilt on the skin, or gets into your eyes.

Most e-liquids contain high concentrations of nicotine, often far more than what's found in a traditional cigarette. According to the U.S. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Poison Control, even a teaspoon of highly concentrated liquid nicotine can be fatal to a child, and dangerous for teens and adults. Just absorbing nicotine through your skin or accidentally getting it in your eyes can lead to nicotine poisoning.

What Is Nicotine Poisoning?

Nicotine poisoning happens when someone takes in too much nicotine at once. This can be through inhalation, ingestion (swallowing), or skin contact. Symptoms can start within minutes and may include:

- Nausea or vomiting
- Dizziness
- Sweating
- Seizures
- Tremors
- Trouble breathing
- In severe cases: loss of consciousness or death

According to a 2022 report from the American Association of Poison Control Centres (AAPCC), thousands of calls are made every year due to accidental nicotine poisoning from e-liquids, especially involving children under 6 years old who were drawn to the colourful packaging and sweet smells.

Why It's Especially Risky for Teens and Kids

Young people are at greater risk because their bodies are smaller and more sensitive to chemicals like nicotine. Even touching vape liquid can allow nicotine to enter the bloodstream through the skin. A few drops absorbed this way can lead to symptoms like headaches, anxiety, or shaking. In children, it can be deadly.

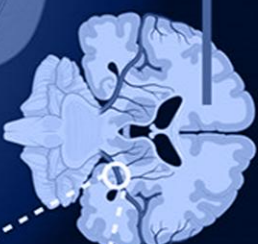
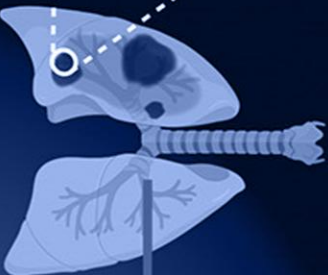
That's why health authorities around the world have raised red flags. The U.S. Surgeon General, Health Canada, and Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) all stress that vape liquids should be handled with extreme caution.

THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF VAPING ON THE BODY



Respiratory

Damage includes lung injury, asthma, and pneumonia



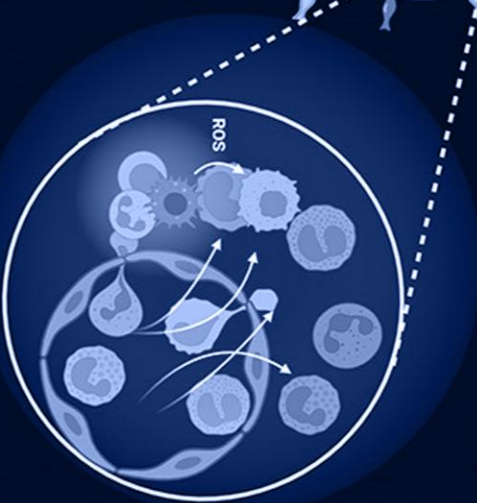
Central nervous system

Damage includes blood-brain barrier disruption, neuroinflammation, and neurotoxicity



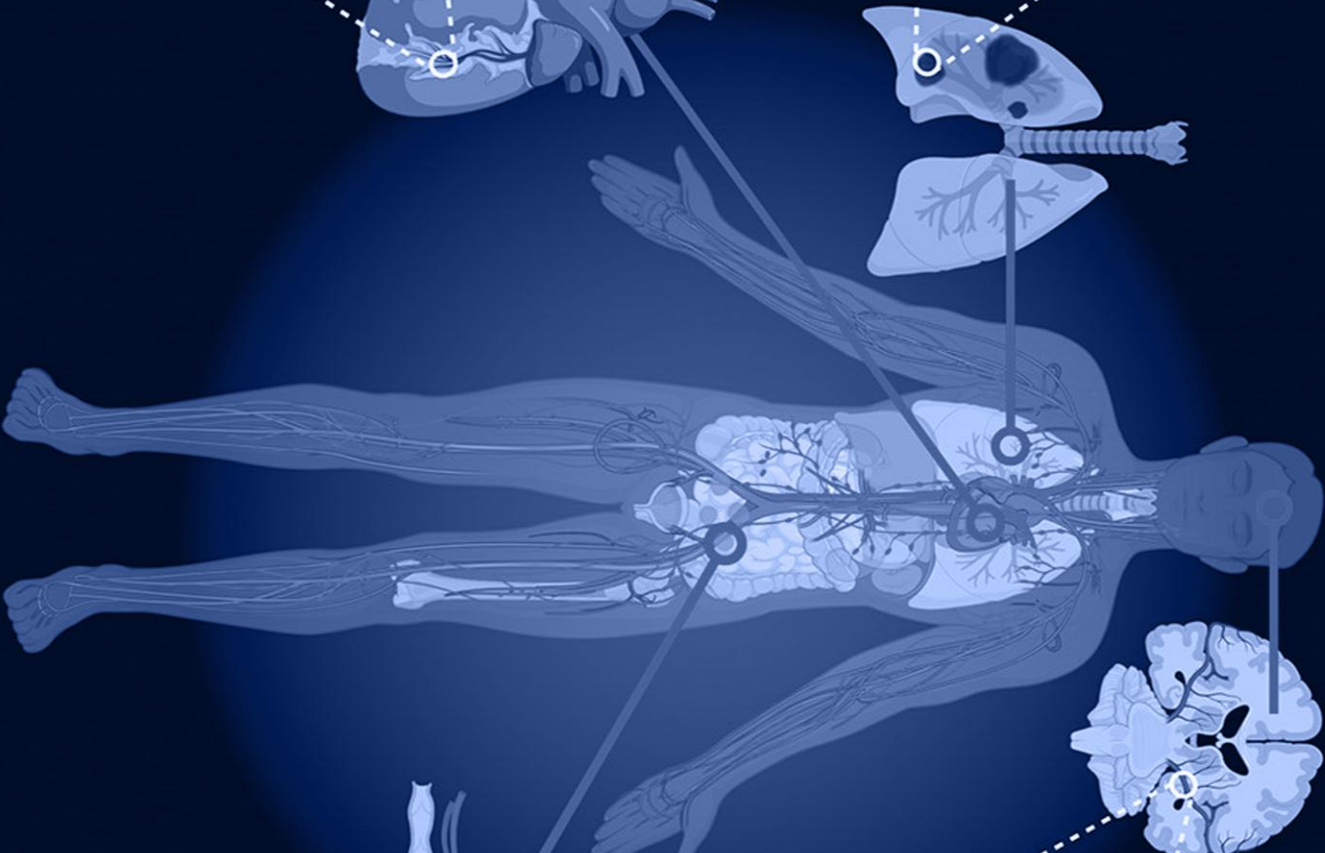
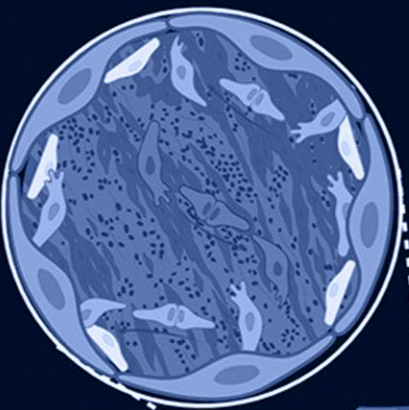
Immunological

Damage includes increased inflammatory and oxidative stress responses and reduced immune efficiency

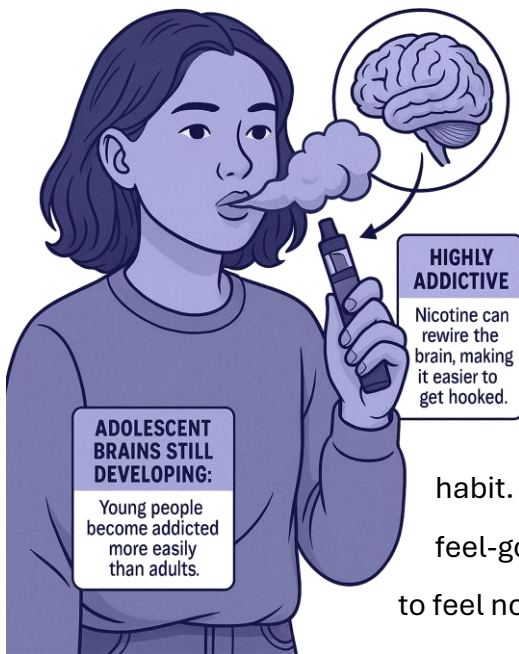


Cardiovascular

Damage includes endothelial and myocardial dysfunction, vascular injury, and oxidative stress



Why Nicotine in Vapes Is So Addictive, Especially for Teens



Nicotine is one of the most addictive substances on the planet. It's the same chemical that hooks people on cigarettes, and now, it's being used in many vapes and e-cigarettes, often disguised in sweet, flavoured clouds.

When you vape regularly, your body and brain start getting used to nicotine really fast. That's because nicotine affects the brain's reward system, the part that controls motivation, pleasure, and habit. Every time you take a hit, your brain gets a little jolt of dopamine, a feel-good chemical. But over time, your brain craves more of that feeling to feel normal. That's how addiction starts.

Why Teens Get Hooked Faster

Teenagers are at even greater risk. That's because your brain is still developing until around age 25, especially the parts that control decision-making, impulse control, and learning (U.S. Surgeon General, 2016). During this stage, your brain is more likely to “learn” addictive behaviours and form long-lasting patterns.

When teens use nicotine, the brain wires itself to depend on it, making it much harder to quit later on. Studies show that early nicotine use can lead to changes in brain development, attention, and memory, even after you stop vaping (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2022).

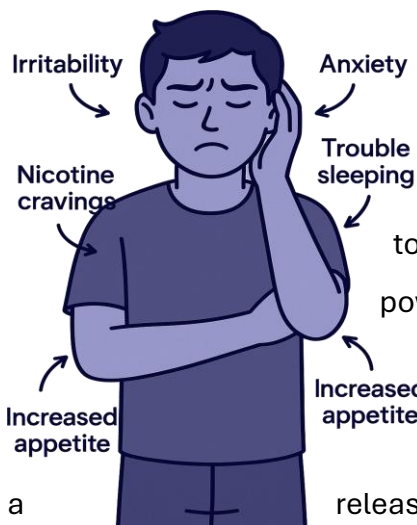
Gateway to Other Addictions

One of the most serious risks is that nicotine doesn't just stop with vaping. Research shows that using nicotine early in life can prime the brain for addiction to other drugs, like alcohol, marijuana, and even

cocaine (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018). In other words, vaping can open the door to more dangerous habits down the line.

Don't let the fruity flavours or smooth devices fool you. Nicotine is a trap, especially for young people. The earlier you start, the faster your brain gets hooked—and the harder it is to break free. Vaping might feel like a quick stress fix, but the long-term cost is control over your mind and body.

Nicotine addiction and withdrawal: What Really Happens



Nicotine, the main ingredient in most vapes and tobacco products, is highly addictive. It's not just a habit—it's a chemical that rewires your brain to crave more. When someone vapes frequently, their brain begins to expect nicotine to feel "normal." That's the start of nicotine addiction, a powerful and hard-to-break cycle.

According to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nicotine reaches the brain within 10 seconds of being inhaled and triggers a release of dopamine, the brain's "feel-good" chemical. But the more you use it, the more your brain relies on it. Eventually, you need more nicotine just to get the same feeling, this is called tolerance (CDC, 2021).

Signs You Might Be Addicted

Nicotine addiction isn't always obvious at first. Here are some key signs:

- You crave your vape or feel anxious when you don't have it
- You've tried to quit but can't stop.

- You need more hits than before to feel the same buzz.
- You use it in secret or feel guilty about vaping.
- Your vaping affects your mood, school, relationships, or sports performance.

Studies from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) confirm that young people addicted to nicotine may become more isolated, distracted, and struggle academically.

What Happens When You Stop (Withdrawal)

Once your brain is hooked on nicotine, quitting is tough, but not impossible. When someone stops vaping, their brain and body have to relearn how to function without nicotine. That's called withdrawal, and it can feel rough at first.

Common withdrawal symptoms include:

- Feeling irritable or on edge
- Being restless, jumpy, or anxious
- Feeling down or depressed
- Trouble concentrating or focusing in class
- Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep
- Feeling extra hungry
- Intense cravings for a vape

According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, these symptoms usually peak within the first week and can last a few days to a few weeks. But here's the good news: they fade over time as your brain heals and rebalances.

You Can Break Free

Nicotine withdrawal is uncomfortable, but it's temporary. Support from friends, family, school counsellors, or a quit program can make it easier. The longer you stay vape-free, the stronger your brain gets, and the more in control of your own life you become.

VAPES: A SAFETY RISK

Vapes Can Explode; And It's Not Just a Scare Tactic

You've probably seen sleek vape pens and devices that look safe and easy to carry around. But here's what many people don't realise: vapes can explode, and when they do, the injuries can be severe or even



deadly.

According to data from the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), vaping devices have been linked to hundreds of fires and explosions across the world. Most of these incidents are caused by the lithium-ion batteries that power e-cigarettes. These batteries can overheat, catch fire, or explode, especially when they are:

- Defective or poorly manufactured
- Damaged or overcharged
- Stored near keys, coins, or metal in pockets
- Exposed to high heat or direct sunlight

Where the Injuries Happen

The most common areas for vape-related injuries include:

- Face and mouth – Many explosions occur while a person is using the vape, causing severe burns, broken teeth, and even loss of eyesight.
- Hands – Devices have exploded while being held, leading to deep burns and amputations.
- Thighs and groin – Some people keep vapes in their pockets. When these explode, they can cause severe burns and permanent damage in highly sensitive areas.

One study published by the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) highlighted cases of head trauma, facial fractures, and even death from vape explosions. Another U.S. federal study showed that injuries from exploding vapes often required hospitalisation and surgery, and many victims were teenagers or young adults.

Fire Hazards at Home and School

Besides personal injuries, vapes have also been linked to fires in backpacks, bedrooms, vehicles, and even schools. Because many students charge vapes with USB cords or store them in warm places (like under pillows or near chargers), they can catch fire without warning.

This doesn't just put the person using the vape at risk; it can endanger friends, classmates, and family members.

How to Stay Safe

The safest choice is to avoid vapes altogether.

REAL-LIFE STORIES



Meet Simah Herman, who was 18 years old when the BBC reported this story in 2019. She posted a picture of herself online after waking up from a medically induced coma. After receiving treatment for pneumonia and lung failure, she wishes to warn others against using vapes and e-cigarettes. Simah's story, along with those of other vape users, has raised questions

about the safety of vaping and the adequacy of industry regulation. Health officials at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), responsible for protecting public health in the US, have been attempting to identify the causes of these issues.

During the same period in the US, the potential health risks are in the spotlight, where this year there have been 450 reported cases of lung illness tied to vaping. There have also been at least six deaths across 33 states.¹

Elijah McClure, 21, was admitted to the ER with severe respiratory issues and flu-like symptoms, and was unresponsive. His parents believed he had been vaping since he was 15. Currently, the Minnesota Department of Health is investigating at least 32 individuals hospitalized after vaping, which includes one death. The CDC has identified 450 cases across the country, resulting in a total of five deaths. This was reported by KARE 11 news.²



¹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/newsbeat-49649486>

² <https://www.kare11.com/article/news/local/21-year-old-from-brooklyn-park-among-growing-number-of-lung-damage-linked-to-vaping/89-de7d9e8a-31d6-405a-aaf5-14c81468222e>

Doctors found inflammation, believed to be linked to vaping, rapidly spread throughout the lungs of an 18-year-old patient at NYU Winthrop in Mineola, Long Island, New York.

The patient was initially admitted with chest pain, fever, and coughing, and was discovered to have acute respiratory distress and fluid in his lungs, Melody Pirzada, pediatric pulmonary chief at the hospital, told Insider.³

A young patient could have died from severe inflammation and respiratory distress likely related to vaping.



This image shows how inflammation (the white shadows) progressed over five days in a hospital patient, enveloping the lungs. Photo courtesy of NYU Winthrop

Vaping damages young people's lungs as much as smoking, study suggests

Research challenges idea that vaping could be healthier alternative to smoking, say authors of research



The proportion of adults in Britain using vapes has climbed steadily over recent years, particularly among young people. Photograph: Jacob King/PA

Vaping damages young people's lungs as much as smoking, according to research that has sparked renewed debate over the health risks of e-cigarettes. In an article published in The Guardian in 2024, the study compared vapers and smokers in a strenuous exercise test, finding that both groups were less fit and much more out of breath than those without either habit. The article further highlighted that "As a result, we're seeing more and more young people take up the habit without knowing what the long-term consequences could be to their health. "Doctors and policymakers need to know about the risks of vaping, and we should be doing all we can to support children and young people to avoid or

quit vaping."⁴

³ <https://www.businessinsider.com/photos-of-vaping-damage-lung-collapse-blister-2019-9#a-young-patient-could-have-died-from-severe-inflammation-and-respiratory-distress-likely-related-to-vaping-3>

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/society/article/2024/sep/08/vaping-damages-young-peoples-lungs-as-much-as-smoking-study-suggests>

PEER PRESSURE & MYTHS

Don't Fall for the Hype: Vaping Myths Busted

You've probably heard a lot about vaping, from friends, social media, or even ads that make it look harmless. But not everything you hear is true. Let's break down 3 of the biggest vaping myths and what's going on:

X "It's safer than smoking."

👉 Truth: Just because it's not a cigarette doesn't mean it's safe. Vapes still contain nicotine, toxic chemicals, and particles that damage your lungs, heart, and brain. Vaping causes serious health problems, such as lung injuries, breathing issues, and addiction. It's not a healthy alternative.

X "Everyone is doing it."

👉 Truth: Most students actually don't vape. Don't believe the hype. Vaping might seem popular online or in some friend groups, but you're in the majority if you say no. Making wise choices doesn't make you uncool, it makes you strong.

X "It's just flavour."

👉 Truth: Even the sweet and fruity flavours you smell still contain harmful chemicals. Many flavoured vapes also include nicotine, even when the label says they don't. The chemicals used for flavouring can irritate your lungs and lead to long-term health issues.

Don't let myths decide your future. Know the facts, protect your health, and make choices that work for you, not what someone says is "cool."

HOW TO SAY NO

You don't need a vape to fit in. You don't owe anyone an explanation. And most importantly, you have every right to protect your body and mind.

Sometimes, the hardest part about staying vape-free isn't knowing the risk; it's knowing what to say when someone offers you a hit. Whether it's peer pressure, curiosity, or just trying to avoid awkward moments, having a confident response ready can make all the difference.

Here are some solid ways to say “no” without losing your cool:

Simple and Direct:

- “No thanks, I don't vape.”
- “I'm not into that stuff.”

Keeping it short and firm sends a clear message—you're not interested, and that's that.

Health-First Response:

- “I care about my lungs too much to mess with that.”
- “I need to stay focused for sports/school. Vaping would just mess me up.”

Linking your choice to health, goals, or something you're passionate about helps people understand your “why.”

Smart and Confident:

- “That stuff messes with your brain. I'm good.”
- “I've seen what it can do. Not worth it.”

Being informed gives you power. You're not scared, you're smart.

No Pressure Needed:

- Walk away. Change the topic. Text a friend.
- If the vibe isn't right, dip. You don't have to entertain pressure to do something you don't want to do.

Have a line ready before the moment happens. That way, you're not caught off guard, and you'll feel more confident sticking to your decision.

Saying no doesn't make you weak; it makes you real. Protecting your future is way cooler than following a trend. You're in control, always.

GETTING HELP

If you or someone you know is vaping and wants to quit, you're definitely not alone! There are people who can help you out. Consider chatting with someone you trust, like a school counsellor, health teacher, or parent. Plus, there are some awesome apps and websites just for teens that provide simple and safe ways to kick the habit. And right here in Guyana, there are reliable Mental Health, Counselling, and Substance Abuse Services that you can reach out to for support and guidance.

Getting help is a smart step, not a weakness. Your health and future are worth it.

Below is a list of key organisations in Guyana that offer support for mental health, substance abuse, and counselling.

MENTAL HEALTH, COUNSELLING, AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE REFERRAL SERVICES

REGION	ORGANISATION	CONTACT
Region 4	AGAPE Network Inc.	219-2300/ 219-2299/ 219-2739
Region 4	ANIRA Counselling and Psychological Services	629-0809
Region 4	Artistes in Direct Support	227-7231; 225-5112
Region 4	ASPIRE Youth Network	688-8429
Region 4	Blossom Inc.	233-6701
Region 4	Caitlin Vieira Counselling	623-0433
Region 4	Child Link Inc.	227-2023
Region 4	Child Protection Agency	337-2667/ 333-3970
Region 4	Childcare & Protection Agency	227-4082/ Hotline: 227-0979
Region 4	Comforting Hearts Mental Health, Counselling, and Substance Abuse	333-4722
Region 4	CPIC Monique's Caring Hands	225-9263
Region 4	Crossroads Suicide and Mental Health Awareness Services	621-8223

Region 4	Family Awareness, Consciousness, Togetherness, FACT Group	335-3990/ 335-3889
Region 4	Guyana Foundation Mental Health, Counselling, and Substance Abuse	671-4114/ 690-9890
Region 4	Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association (GRPA)	225-3286
Region 4	HIAS Guyana Mental Health, Counselling, and Substance Abuse	227-6758
Region 4	Inner Sanctuary- Meditation and Wellness Centre	694-5875/ 500-6848
Region 4	Lifeline Counselling Services	676-2664
Region 4	LIFE Reform	225-2708
Region 4	Phoenix Recovery Project	220-6825
Region 4	PH Medical Services (Psychiatry)	622-9011
Region 4	Ptolemy Reid Rehabilitation Centre	226-1441
Region 4	Solutions Counselling Services	643-2979
Region 4	St. Francis Community Developers (SFCD)	337-4195/ 337-4091/ 337-4320
Region 4	The Wellness Centre	608-8924/ 661-9446
Region 4	Tull Clinical Psychotherapy Services	697-5528
Region 6	Comforting Hearts	333-4722/ 333-6997
Region 6	Family Awareness, Consciousness, Togetherness, FACT Group	335-3990/ 335-3889
Region 6	Child Protection Agency	337-2667/ 333-3970
Region 6	Community-Based Rehabilitation CBR – Region 6	226-6946/ 226-5780
Region 6	St. Francis Community Developers (SFCD)	337-4090/ 337-4195/ 337-4091/ 337-4320
Region 6	United Brick Layers	333-3322
Region 7	Child Protection Agency	255-2964
Region 10	Child Protection Agency	441-5868

REFERENCES

- Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). E-cigarettes and youth: What educators and coaches need to know. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes
- Reidel, B., Radicioni, G., Clapp, P. W., Ford, A. A., Abdelwahab, S., Rebuli, M. E., ... & Alexis, N. E. (2018). E-cigarette use causes a unique innate immune response in the lung, involving increased neutrophilic inflammation. *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*, 197(4), 492-501.
- Chatterjee, S., Tao, J. Q., Johncola, A., Guo, W., Caporale, A., Langham, M. C., & Wehrli, F. W. (2020). E-cigarettes and their impact on health: From toxicity to therapeutics. *Respiratory Research*, 21(1), 1-11.
- Ghosh, A., Coakley, R. D., Ghio, A. J., Muhlebach, M. S., Esther, C. R., Alexis, N. E., & Tarran, R. (2019). Chronic e-cigarette exposure alters the human bronchial epithelial proteome. *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*, 200(6), 678-680.
- National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2023). Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes). Retrieved from <https://nida.nih.gov/publications/drugfacts/electronic-cigarettes-e-cigarettes>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023). Quick facts on the risks of e-cigarettes for kids, teens, and young adults. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/Quick-Facts-on-the-Risks-of-E-cigarettes.html
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2016). E-cigarette use among youth and young adults: A report of the Surgeon General. Retrieved from <https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov>
- National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2022). Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes). Retrieved from <https://nida.nih.gov/publications/drugfacts/electronic-cigarettes-e-cigarettes>
- Johns Hopkins Medicine. (2023). Vaping and mental health. Retrieved from <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/vaping-and-mental-health>
- U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), 2017 – Electronic Cigarette Fires and Explosions
- JAMA Network, 2019 – Injuries from E-Cigarette Explosions: Facial Trauma and Head Wounds
- Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2022 – E-Cigarette Battery Safety
- American Burn Association (ABA), 2021 – Burn Injuries from E-Cigarette Explosions

- U.S. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2022 – Electronic Cigarettes: What’s the Bottom Line?
- American Association of Poison Control Centres (AAPCC), 2022 – Annual Report on Nicotine Exposure Cases
- National Capital Poison Centre – Nicotine Poisoning from E-Cigarettes
- U.S. Surgeon General’s Report (2016): E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults
- National Institute on Drug Abuse (2022): Nicotine Addiction and the Teenage Brain
- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2018): Public Health Consequences of E-Cigarettes
- Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), 2023 – Vaping and Liquid Nicotine Safety Warnings
- National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR). (2022). Oral Health Effects of E-Cigarettes. Retrieved from <https://www.nidcr.nih.gov>
- American Dental Association (ADA). (2020). Vaping and Oral Health. Retrieved from <https://www.ada.org>
- Wadia, R. S., et al. (2021). Impact of E-cigarettes on Periodontal Health: A Clinical Review. *British Dental Journal*, 231(9), 561–567. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41415-021-3245-1>
- World Health Organisation (WHO). (2021). Tobacco: E-cigarettes. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/e-cigarettes>

“Vaping isn't harmless. It's a trap disguised in colourful packaging and fruity flavours. Your health, your choices, and your future matter. Choose to be informed, strong, and vape-free”.





CUSTOMS ANTI NARCOTIC UNIT

Phone: +(592)226-0431

Address: Homestretch Avenue, Georgetown, Guyana

mail: info@canu.gov.gy

Web.: <https://canu.gov.gy/>