

Young people and vaping

Lesson Plan

North West Health Improvement Team, on behalf of Glasgow City HSCP
Health Improvement

What is a vape?

- They go by many different names: Electronic cigarettes, e-cigarettes, e-cigs, vapes, vape pens, tank systems, electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS)
- They are battery powered devices that heat a liquid (often containing nicotine, flavourings and other chemicals) and produce a vapour that is inhaled by the user (and potentially bystanders too).
- There are many different types of vaping device on the market which vary greatly and are evolving rapidly.



Varieties of vapes

Pods

Pods are refillable, and usually have a button or two to operate and one to switch modes. Pods use nicotine salts which provide higher doses of nicotine without a harsh sensation. They can look like a USB stick.

Disposables

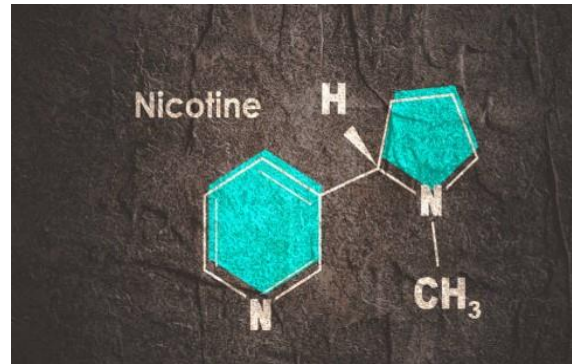
These are often shaped like pods, and are supposed to be discarded after the e-liquid has been used so do not have any buttons. They come in a varieties of flavours and designs. The average disposable vape contains around 500-600 puffs which is the equivalent to 20 cigarettes.



What is in a vape?

Vapes work by heating a liquid (called an e-liquid) that typically contains:

- Nicotine
- Propylene glycol
- Vegetable glycerine
- Flavourings



Discussion point

What do you think is the appeal of vapes for young people?

In groups discuss and write down what you think attracts young people to using vapes. Consider who you think they are marketed towards.



The dangers of Nicotine and young people

- Nicotine is a stimulant drug which is highly addictive.
- Nicotine can harm young people's brain development, which continues maturing up to the age of 25 (Leslie et al. 2015).
- Using nicotine from a young age can harm the parts of the brain that influence concentration levels, learning ability, mood, and impulse control (Leslie et al. 2015).
- Using nicotine in early years may lead to subsequent abuse of nicotine and other substances (Kandel and Kandel 2014).
- Some vapes are marketed as 'nicotine free' but testing has confirmed they do in fact contain nicotine (CDC 2020).



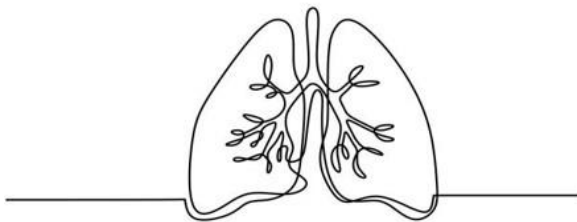
How harmful is vaping?

- In the short to medium term, vaping poses a small fraction of the risks of smoking.
- Vaping is not risk-free, particularly for people who have never smoked.
- Both short and long term health impacts.
- There are concerns that a new generation may become addicted to nicotine.
- There is strong evidence that vaping creates a new route into smoking for young people.



Health concerns

- Recent studies suggest that vapes can negatively impact heart (British Heart Foundation 2016) and lung health (Gotts et al. 2019).
- There is increasing reports of severe lung illness related to using e-cigarette (GOV.UK, n.d.)
- Other common side effects reported include dry cough, shortness of breath and headaches (Keller 2017).
- Vaping can also increase the risk of other conditions such as gum disease, tooth decay and early tooth loss (ASH 2023).



Safety concerns

- Vapes can cause unintentional injuries. Defective vape batteries can explode leading to serious injuries such as burns (Seitz and Kabir 2018).
- There are increasing reports from hospitals of growing numbers of children accidentally swallowing liquid nicotine from vape refills. There is a risk of poisoning from swallowing e-cigarette liquid (CAPT 2022).



The law around vaping

The UK has one of the most regulated vaping markets in the world.

The Law here includes:

- Minimum safety standards – such as limits on e-liquid size and strength of nicotine.
- Packaging and labelling requirements.
- A ban on advertising in print, broadcast, online and other electronic media.
- A ban on the sale of vapes to under-18s .
- It is illegal for an adult to buy one on behalf of under-18s.
- Some flavourings and additives are banned .
- ALL colourings are banned.



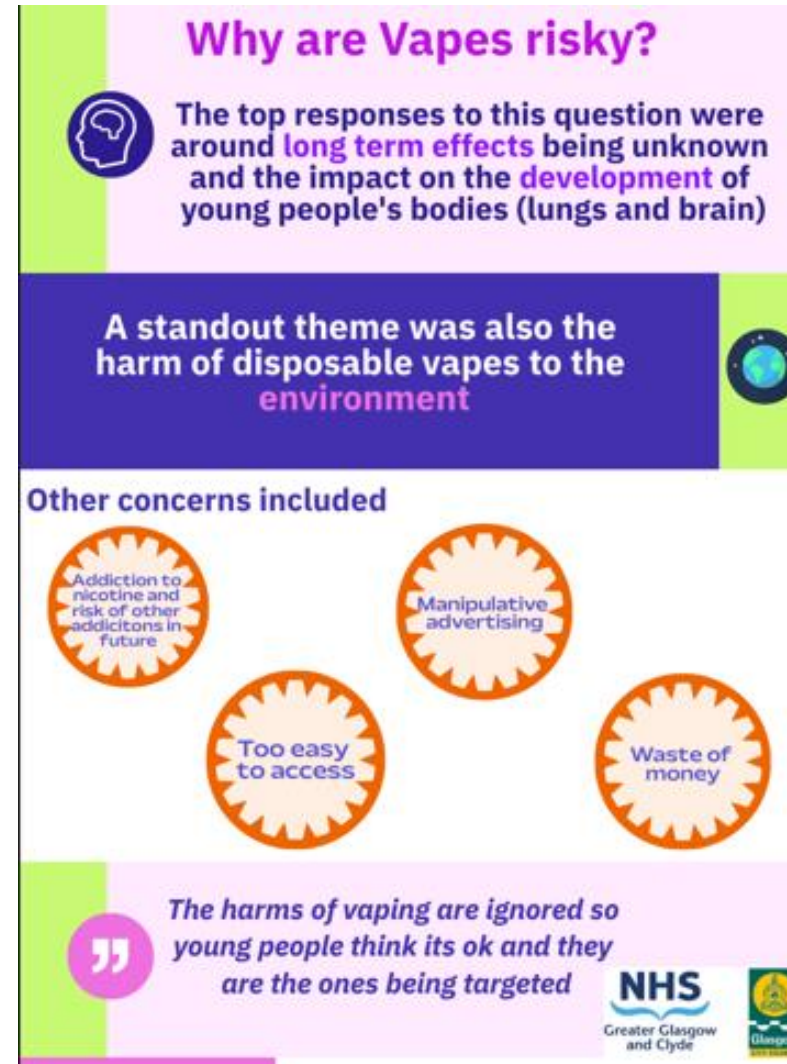
Discussion point

Can you identify the risks attached to vaping?

In groups discuss and write down the different ways in which vaping could be potentially harmful.



Feedback from youths



Why do young people try vapes?

When we asked local young people in Glasgow why they vaped, these were some of their responses:

- “It was a trend and I felt pressured into it. I wanted to be cool and felt if I said no it would be embarrassing”.
- “One of my pals had one and I took a draw and liked it, the buzzing feeling and felt more awake”.
- “Peer pressure, one of my pals had one and said try this”
- “I felt forced to try it. I was told by my friend that I should be mature and try it and when I did they said they were proud of me. I try not to smoke it now, but I do like the taste”.
- “I wanted to try it, because other people were doing it”.



Discussion point

It can be helpful to think about what you would say if you felt under pressure to vape.

In groups discuss and make a list of different responses you might give if you were offered a vape.



Peer pressure

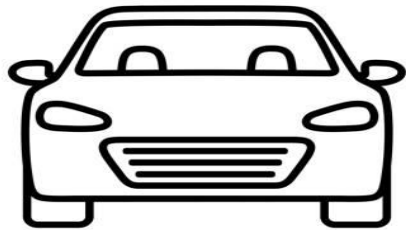
Top tips for saying no...

- Think before hand what you could say if offered – so your prepared with an answer if the situation arises.
- Be calm when saying no ... remember **it is OK to say no!**
- Be confident and firm when saying no - you've made your decision and don't let yourself be persuaded otherwise.
- **Stick to what you believe in.** Real friends shouldn't pressure you!
- Hearing you say no might give others in the group the confidence to say no too.



Environmental issues - electronic waste

- In the UK 1.3 million plus single-use vapes are being thrown away every week!
- Two disposable vapes are thrown away every second in the UK.
- Each vape contains 0.15g of lithium. This accumulates to 10 tonnes of lithium a year. This is the equivalent of the lithium content inside the batteries of 1,200 electric vehicles.



Environmental concerns

Vape waste is extremely harmful to our environment.

Vape waste consists of three different forms of environmentally harmful waste:

1. Plastic waste
2. Electronic waste
3. Chemical waste

1.4 million vapes are sold each week in the UK and only 50% are disposed of correctly - consider the volume of electronic waste mounting up in our general waste and in our environment as litter, this poses a threat to our wildlife and is a hazard to our refuse workers.



Environmental concerns – plastic waste

- The single-use plastic cartridges found on vapes are largely non-biodegradable and are poorly recyclable.
- The plastic will eventually break down into micro plastics these can harm marine wildlife and even end up in seafood for human consumption and in our drinking water!



Correct disposal



Activity

Time to get creative – select one of the options below and create a poster to:

- Raise awareness of the harms of vaping in under 18s or,
- Raise awareness of the environmental harms caused by vaping i.e. how they are recyclable/ harmful to our wildlife etc.

