

Young people and vaping

S1-S3 Lesson Plan

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

What is vaping?

- Vaping is the use of an electronic device to inhale vapour derived from a heated liquid.
- The heated liquid is known as an e-liquid and typically contains Nicotine; Propylene Glycol; Vegetable Glycerine and Flavourings.
- There are many different types of vaping device on the market which vary greatly and are evolving rapidly.

Vapes are not meant to be used by young people or people who do not smoke. Vapes were created to help highly dependent adults who smoke with cravings when they are trying to quit.



Varieties of vapes

- Vapes come in a variety of designs, with refillable and single-use devices being available.
- Single use disposable vapes are the most popular amongst young people.
- They are 'single-use', and are available in a variety of colours, flavours and designs.
- Affordable price, increasing their accessibility for many young people.



Discussion point

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

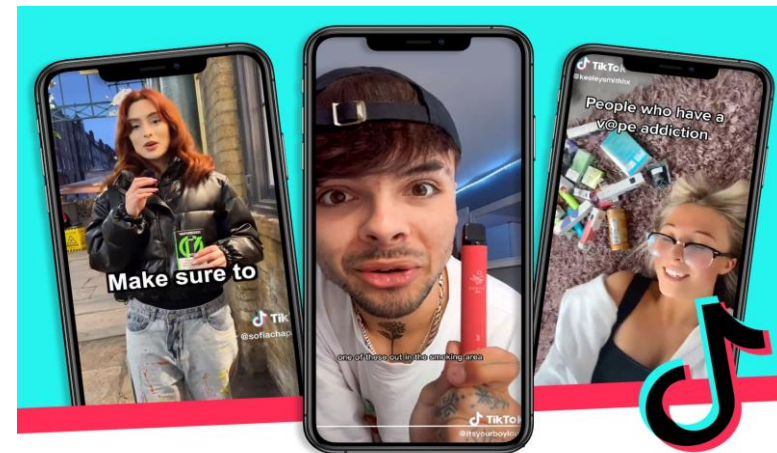
In groups discuss and write down what you think attracts young people to using vapes. Consider who you think they are marketed towards.



Marketing

Vapes are not harm free and should not be used by children.

- However, vapes are often branded as bright, colourful, flavourful devices.
- Shop displays are often strategically placed and very eye catching for young people to be drawn to them.
- Unlike cigarettes, certain forms of vape promotion is still permitted.



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”.

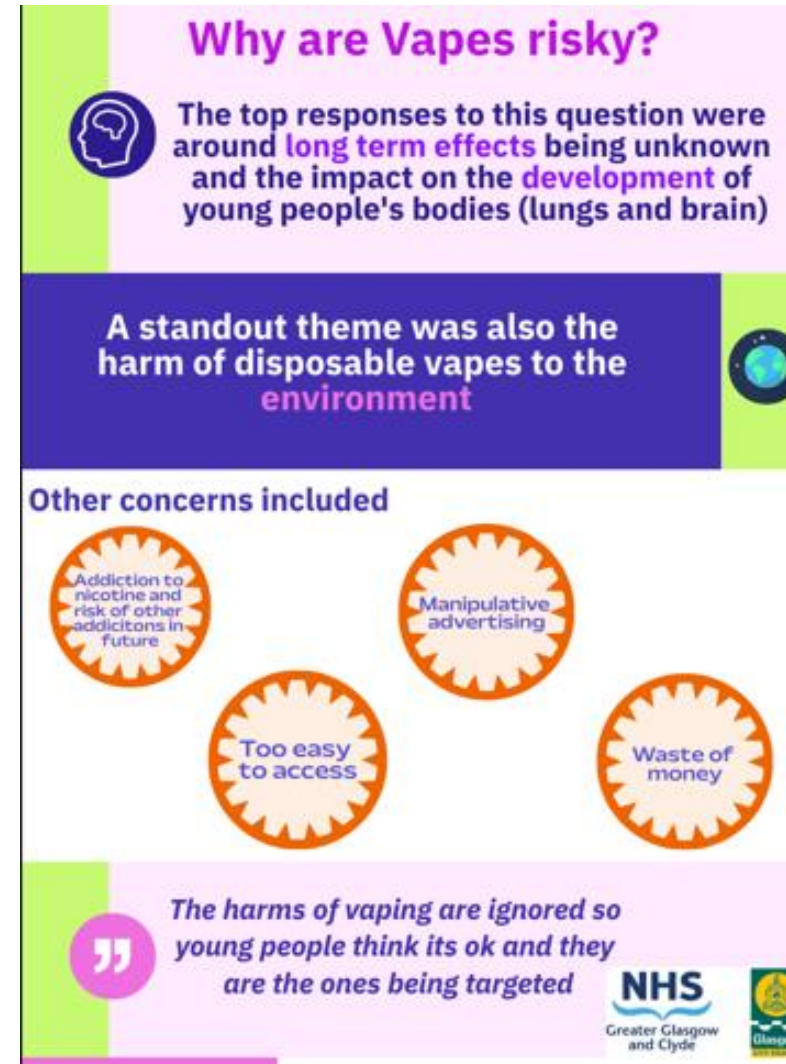
“Peer pressure, one of my pals had one and said try this”

“I wanted to try it, because other people were doing it”.

“One of my pals had one and I took a draw and liked it, the buzzing feeling and felt more awake”.

“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”.

Feedback from youths



The law around vaping

Currently the UK laws around vaping state:

- It is illegal to sell vapes to anyone under 18yrs.
- It is illegal for an adult to buy vapes on behalf of anyone under-18yrs.
- There are restrictions on the strength of nicotine in a vape and on the size of the e-liquid tank.

However, UK legislation is due to change in 2025 which will tighten laws coming into place. These include:

- Banning of disposable vapes completely.
- Greater restrictions on the flavourings used in refillable vapes.
- Greater restrictions on promotion of vapes.



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.



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 medium term health impacts.
- There are concerns that a new generation may become addicted to nicotine.
- There is emerging evidence that vaping may lead to smoking



Physical Health

- Recent studies suggest that vapes can negatively impact heart (BHF, 2016) .
- It can negatively impact Lung health (Gotts et al. 2019) and 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 may affect sporting performance and lead to lung inflammation (irritation), which can make it harder to do well in sports. (Young et al 2020)



Mental Health

When a person is dependent on nicotine and then stops using it their brain and body must get used to not having it- this results in withdrawal symptoms.

Symptoms include:

- Irritability
- Anxiousness, depression
- Trouble sleeping, restlessness
- Nicotine cravings



Young people may turn to vaping to try to deal with stress or anxiety, creating a cycle of nicotine dependence but nicotine addiction can be a source of stress in itself.

Safety concerns

Vapes often contain a lithium-ion battery and this can result in safety concerns such as fires or explosions.

To avoid this lithium-ion batteries should:

- Be protected against being damaged, crushed, punctured or immersed in water.
- Be kept away from metal items such as coins or keys in a pocket or bag.
- Not be exposed to excessive temperatures.

There are also increasing reports from hospitals of children accidentally swallowing liquid nicotine from e-cigarette refills - this poses a risk of poisoning. (CAPT 2022)



Discussion Point

Do you think disposable vapes pose an environmental harm?

In groups discuss any potential harms to the environment caused by vaping and think about how these could be reduced



Environmental concerns

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

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

Zero Waste Scotland estimated that in 2022, up to 26 million disposable vapes were thrown away in Scotland!

Consider that 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 in 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



Discussion point

It can be helpful to think about what you would say if you ever 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 – this way you will be prepared with an answer if you're asked.
- 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.



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.

