

# E-Cigarettes and Adolescents: What It's All About



American  
Heart  
Association

E-cigarettes are electronic devices that are designed to deliver nicotine, flavorings, and other additives. **They are the most commonly used tobacco product among US middle and high school students.**

## How do e-cigarettes work?

The user fills an e-cigarette with a liquid, which is heated by the device to produce an aerosol. The user inhales the aerosol into the lungs.



## Know the Facts



### E-cigarettes may not look like cigarettes at all.

E-cigarettes come in different shapes and sizes. Some look like regular cigarettes. Others look like USB flash drives, pens, cigars, pipes, and other everyday items.

### One brand is a favorite of middle and high school kids.

The brand is called JUUL (pronounced like *jewel*). A JUUL e-cigarette looks like a USB flash drive. All JUUL e-cigarettes deliver a high level of nicotine. JUUL refill pods come in a variety of flavors like mango and mint.

### Kids use different names for e-cigarettes.

You may hear students use the terms “e-cigs,” “e-hookahs,” “vapes,” “vape pens,” “mods,” “tank systems,” or “JUULs.” Kids may refer to smoking e-cigarettes as “JUULing” or “vaping.”

### Kids use e-cigarettes for various reasons.

- They believe they aren't as harmful as other tobacco products.
- They have a friend or family member who is a user.
- They like the appealing flavors.
- E-cigarettes are easy to get and seem cool.
- Sometimes e-cigarettes can be used in places where smoking regular cigarettes isn't allowed.

### Kids see e-cigarette ads.

Middle and high school students see e-cigarette ads in retail stores, on television, in movies, on the Internet, and in magazines and newspapers.



# Kids Think They're Safe. They're Not.



## E-cigarettes are harmful.

**They are not nicotine-free.** Most e-cigarettes deliver nicotine, a highly addictive drug that can harm brain development.

**They are not “just water vapor.”** The aerosol from e-cigarettes may be harmful to the lungs and the cardiovascular system.

**They are a dangerous stepping stone.** Using them in middle or high school makes a student more likely to smoke other tobacco products.

**Students think, “I’ll just try one.”** Nearly 20% of kids who simply try an e-cigarette go on to become regular users.

## E-Cigarette usage among kids is going up—and fast.

Research shows a significant increase in e-cigarette use between 2017 and 2018.

**The numbers are alarming.**

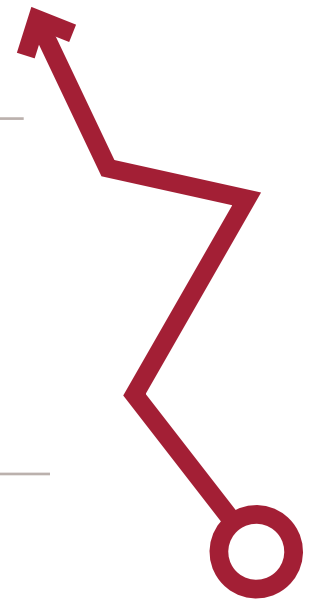
**78%** increase in e-cigarette use among high schoolers

**48%** increase in e-cigarette use among middle schoolers

## 1.5 million more students used e-cigarettes in 2018 vs 2017.

**Over 60%** of teenagers believe that using an occasional e-cigarette is relatively safe.

(Statistics from the 2018 National Youth Tobacco Survey)



## What can you do?

### Know the facts.

Learn about e-cigarettes and their risks to young people.

### Pay attention.

Students are likely using them at your school in hallways, bathrooms, and even in your classroom.

### Develop, implement, and enforce smoke-free school policies.

Using any tobacco product—including e-cigarettes—is unsafe. Make sure students know that e-cigarettes are no exception.