

# Vaping and Young People For Educators

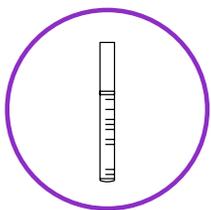
Though tobacco smoking has fallen out of favour amongst Australian youth in recent years, we've witnessed the rise of a popular alternative: 'vaping'.

This resource is designed to fill the knowledge gap around vaping and e-cigarettes, to provide current research and information, and to empower schools and educators to inform and protect young people from potential harm. As Australia's most trusted lung health charity, Lung Foundation Australia continues to champion the best outcomes around lung health and is concerned about the large and avoidable burden of disease that may result from vaping and e-cigarette use.

## What is vaping?

Vaping is the act of smoking e-cigarettes, or 'vapes', which are lithium battery-powered devices that look like metallic wands, USBs or other hand-held devices. Vapes use cartridges filled with liquids, or 'juice', which typically contain nicotine, artificial flavourings and various chemicals. The liquid is heated into an aerosol, or vapour, and inhaled into the user's lungs.

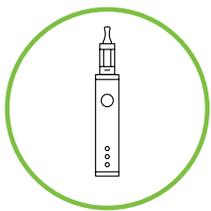
The range of vape and e-cigarette choices have evolved rapidly in recent years, with many models and liquid flavours. Vapes use two main delivery systems: Electronic Nicotine Delivery (ENDS) and Electronic Non-Nicotine Delivery (ENNDS). They generally come in three main categories: minis, closed pods, and refillables. Types of vapes include:



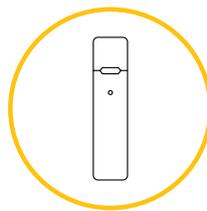
**Minis** – also known as 'cigalikes', Cuvides, BIDI Sticks or Stif. These are made to look like a normal cigarette and are disposable.



**Refillable systems** – also known as Mods, Tanks or APVs. These are newer models with more settings and longer battery life. The vape juice is re-filled into the device's tank.



**Closed pod e-cigs** – these look like minis, but aren't disposable. The liquid 'pod' is replaced with another when it runs out.



**Other brands** – there are also some closed pod brands such as JUUL which can be charged in a USB slot.

It's worth highlighting that non-nicotine systems can be just as harmful due to the toxins they use. Though safe to ingest, these toxins may be very unsafe to inhale. These products lack proper testing, and **often still contain nicotine even if they claim to be free of it.**

## Attraction for young people

The novelty nature of these devices, the influence of a direct family member or friend who vapes and the incorrect perception that vaping is relatively harmless – particularly compared to regular cigarettes – are amongst the top reasons why young people take the activity up. Over recent years viral online trends involving vapes have become increasingly popular and rates of vaping amongst young people is steadily rising. The flavours available, such as mango and peppermint, smell enticing and taste better than combustible tobacco. This is another key drawcard for young people.

The accessibility and affordability also makes them attractive. Though restricted in Australia, vape equipment can easily be obtained through online channels, and remains a cheaper option than cigarettes. Sophisticated marketing through social media and online channels has been successful in glamourising vaping.

## Health risks and harms

Vaping is unsafe and potentially dangerous. While the long-term health effects are still relatively unknown, we do know that vaping in the short-term has been associated with nausea, vomiting, mouth and airway irritation, chest pain and heart palpitations.

There is a common misconception that vaping is merely harmless water vapour – in fact, it's an aerosol made up of tiny toxic particles. While this aerosol might have fewer chemical additives than combustible tobacco products, it still contains and emits many harmful compounds, including:



**Formaldehyde and acrolein**, which can cause irreversible lung damage.



**Propylene glycol**, which is toxic to human cells.

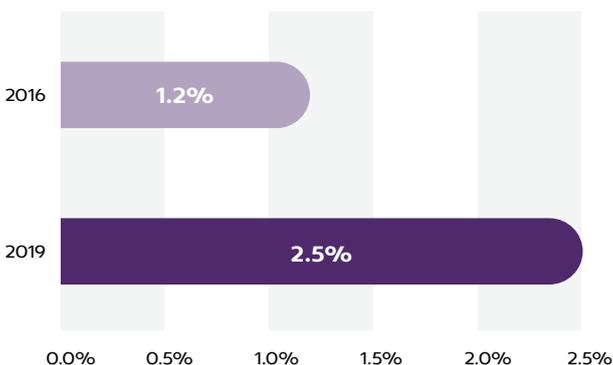


**Nicotine**, which is highly addictive and can harm the still-developing adolescent brain, particularly in areas that control attention, learning, mood and behavioural control.

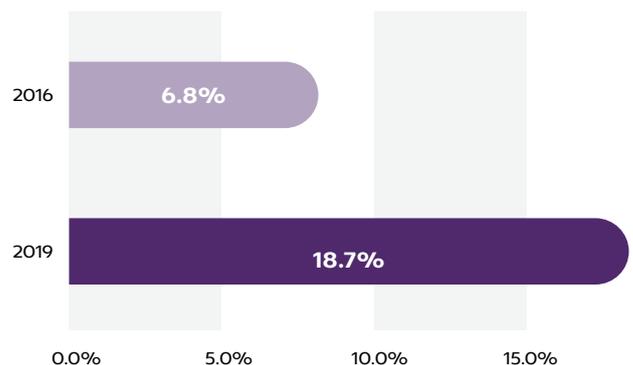
Additionally, vaping is associated with the future uptake of cigarette smoking and can be considered a 'gateway' to further risk and health complications.

## Vaping in Australia

Australians aged 14 or older who use e-cigarettes



Vaping amongst 18-24 year olds who smoke



Vaping use is on the rise in Australia. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, e-cigarette use by Australians aged 14 or older has more than doubled from 2016 to 2019 and is most common among smokers aged 18-24 at 18.7% (an increase from 6.8% in 2016).

With the exception of Western Australia, each state and territory permits the sale of vapes and e-cigarettes, but not the sale or purchase of liquid flavours that contain nicotine. For this reason, most users purchase their products and liquids online. Doctors in Australia can prescribe vape nicotine as a means of weaning off tobacco use, though there is little evidence that vaping is successful in achieving this outcome.

# Additional information and resources

Check your state or territory government health and education websites for information, advice and policy positions. Here are some examples of evidence-based resources and information.

## Government resources

### National

[About e-cigarettes](#)

### VIC

[Smoking and Vaping Ban](#)

### ACT

[Electronic Cigarettes](#)

### SA

[New e-cigarette laws and other changes to tobacco laws in South Australia](#)

[Health impacts of e-cigarettes for children, young people and adults](#)

[Vaping and oral health](#)

### NT

[Electronic Cigarettes](#)

### TAS

[Electronic Cigarettes](#)

### NSW

E-cigarettes and young people

E-Cigarettes

### WA

[Electronic cigarettes in Western Australia](#)

### QLD

[Electronic Cigarettes](#)

[Health effects of vaping](#)

[The known harms of e-cigarettes and vaping](#)

## Health and education resources

Organisation	Resource
Alcohol and Drug Foundation	<a href="#">Vaping amongst young people</a>
Better Health Channel	<a href="#">E-Cigarettes</a>
Drug and Alcohol Research and Training Australia	<a href="#">Vaping Resources for Teachers</a>
healthdirect	<a href="#">E-cigarettes (Vaping)</a>
Positive Choices	<a href="#">Electronic Cigarettes and Vaping</a>
School News Australia	<a href="#">Staving off the teen vaping epidemic</a>
School Drug Education and Road Aware	<a href="#">E-cigarettes - Resources for school staff</a>
The Catholic Weekly	<a href="#">Vaping: Sorting out 'fact from fiction' for those parents struggling with the issue</a>
The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne	<a href="#">E-cigarettes and teens</a>
Scholastic	<a href="#">The real cost of vaping</a>
Smokefree Teen	<a href="#">Quit Vaping</a>
YouthNow	<a href="#">E-cigarette and Vaping Resources</a>



**This fact sheet has been developed as part of a suite of vaping resources. Additional fact sheets for parents and carers, teens, and young adults are also available. To find out more and to access information and support, contact Lung Foundation Australia.**

Free call 1800 654 301  
Visit [lungfoundation.com.au/unveil](http://lungfoundation.com.au/unveil)  
Email [enquiries@lungfoundation.com.au](mailto:enquiries@lungfoundation.com.au)