

Alcohol and Other Drugs

Understanding vaping.

1800 700 514 (Freecall)
unitingvictas.org.au/aod

What is vaping?

Vaping is the word used to describe inhaling vapour through a device. The most common forms are e-cigarettes, e-hookahs, vape pens, vaporisers and pipes. Vaping liquids are made up of propylene glycol and/or vegetable glycerine. Several contain nicotine, and others may include other substances such as synthetic cannabis or new psychoactive substances (NPS). The device itself may add plastics and heavy metals to the mixture when heated. It's not always clear what's in a vaping product.

Vaping is an emerging trend in Australia, especially among young people.

Common effects include:

- Pleasant taste
- Stimulant effect from nicotine

Negative effects include:

- Shortness of breath
- Fever
- Chills
- Cough
- Vomiting
- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Rapid heart rate

Some research studies have looked at the longer-term effects of vaping. One potential risk is e-cigarette or vaping-use associated lung injury (EVALI). Symptoms of this condition include the negative effects listed above.

Cutting down or quitting

Some people switch from tobacco to vaping as a way of stopping smoking. There have been many studies about the health risks of each, with some saying that vaping is safer than tobacco due to fewer toxic chemicals. Other studies suggest there are different health impacts for either substance, and not all the side-effects of vaping are known yet.

Some ideas for cutting down vaping:

- Get a prescription instead of using an unregulated version
- Avoid smoking and vaping together, as this will increase the amount of nicotine
- Leave your vape at home if you're leaving the house for a short while to decrease the dependency
- Try to only vape in outdoor areas with good ventilation
- Be mindful of vaping in places where you wouldn't normally smoke cigarettes
- If you like the flavour of your vape, try having lollies of that flavour instead
- Avoid "dry puffing" when the device runs out of liquid, as internal mechanisms can burn and release toxic fumes.

The future is bright.



If you do decide to stop vaping, good on you. There are a few things to consider:

- Prepare for an increase in appetite
- Carry healthy snacks with you (such as nuts and seeds)
- Carry a water bottle and have small sips of water regularly
- Keep your hands occupied
- Focus on deep breathing and pay attention to your breath
- Find new things to associate with a craving, replacing the ritual.

Withdrawal

Many of the symptoms of vaping withdrawal are similar to tobacco withdrawal. This is partly because both products contain nicotine and similar chemicals, but also because they both involve breaking daily habits.

Nicotine replacement therapies (NRT) can help significantly with managing withdrawal symptoms. These include patches, mouth sprays, gums, lozenges and inhalers. You can also talk to a medical professional about other medications to manage longer term cravings.

Contacts

If you want to talk to someone about your own or someone else's alcohol or other drug use, you can get more information from these Victorian and Tasmanian state-wide services. If you are located in another state, these contacts will direct you to your local support services:

DirectLine

24/7 service offering counselling, information and referrals.

T 1800 888 236

directline.org.au

Harm Reduction Victoria

Support and information from other drug using peers.

T 03 9329 1500

hrvic.org.au

QUIT

T 13 78 48

quit.org.au

Family Drug and Gambling Help

Victorian support for family members.

T 1300 660 068

sharc.org.au/sharc-programs/family-drug-gambling-help

Drug alerts

health.vic.gov.au/alcohol-and-drugs/drug-alerts

Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drugs Tasmania Service Directory

atdc.org.au/service-directory

Alcohol and Drug Information Service TAS

24/7 service offering counselling, information and referrals.

T 1800 811 994

Uniting would like to thank consumer partners for drawing on their lived experience to contribute to this series of publications.

