

# VAPING: WHAT PARENTS/CAREGIVERS NEED TO KNOW

Talking with your kids early about the harms of vaping and other nicotine products can help them make informed decisions about their health such as refusing the offer to use or [deciding to quit](#).

In [Ontario](#), **1 in 4 students in grades 8 to 12 have tried vaping** and **nearly 90 per cent of them are vaping nicotine**.

## KNOW THE FACTS AND START THE CONVERSATION

An **e-cigarette**, often called a vape, is a battery-powered device that heats a liquid chemical (e-liquid) into an aerosol (commonly known as a “vapour”). The e-liquid contains glycerin, propylene glycol, chemical flavourings and often contains nicotine which is the addictive substance found in cigarettes. When heated, [more chemicals](#) and heavy metal contaminants are created, some that are known to be cancer-causing and harmful to the lungs causing wheeze, cough and worsening existing lung conditions like asthma. The aerosol can then be inhaled – this is the act of vaping.

Some concerns related to youth vaping include:

- The developing youth brain is more vulnerable to addiction. Vapes can contain **more nicotine than 20 cigarettes**. Youth who vape may be more likely to use cigarettes.
- **Nicotine can alter the youth brain development**, negatively affecting memory, concentration and behaviour. Other substances ([cannabis](#)) can also be inhaled in vapes, impacting the brain.
- Many youth say **they vape to cope with feelings of stress, anxiety or depression**, but nicotine can actually make these [symptoms worse](#).

Starting the conversation with youth may not be easy but [preparing](#) can help to have an honest, informed and supportive discussion.

For more information, visit [Tobacco, Vaping and Youth](#) or email [tobaccofreeliving@york.ca](mailto:tobaccofreeliving@york.ca).

*[This document has been prepared and approved by The Regional Municipality of York. We encourage you to share this information in your communications with families in its entirety. Any modification to wording or by reproducing it in part with other wording can alter the original meaning and may no longer be accurate.]*

### PUBLIC HEALTH

1-877-464-9675

TTY 1-866-512-6228

[York.ca/VapeFacts](https://york.ca/VapeFacts)

Last Updated: August 29, 2024



# NICOTINE, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND YOUTH

Social media can influence how youth feel about certain products including electronic cigarettes, commonly called “vapes”, and [nicotine pouches](#). No matter the form, nicotine is highly addictive and can be harmful to the developing youth brain.

## ARE YOUTH THE TARGET?

Commercial tobacco and vape companies behind these products use strong marketing techniques including “cool” designs, new technology and candy-like flavours making vapes and nicotine pouches appear safe and harmless. These products are promoted by people that youth recognize as peers, social media influencers or even celebrities which can increase the likelihood of youth using these products.

This puts a **whole new generation of youth at risk of becoming addicted to nicotine.**

## WHAT CAN PARENTS/CAREGIVERS DO?

Here are a few tips to help protect youth from the unwanted influences of social media:

1. Adjust device (phones, tablets, etc.) settings by using content controls and work with your child to establish screen time settings to [set time limits](#).
2. Monitor and discuss your child’s social media use in a non-judgmental manner, asking them what they saw and their understanding of it. [Prepare for the conversation](#).
3. Encourage [media literacy](#) by discussing whether what they see on social media mirrors the real world and how to judge if something is reliable and trustworthy.



This material is provided by York Region Public Health. For more information and/or quit supports for youth visit [Tobacco, Vaping and Youth](#) or email [tobaccofreeliving@york.ca](mailto:tobaccofreeliving@york.ca).

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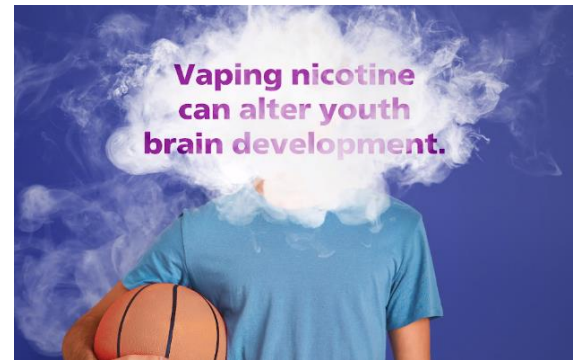
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# VAPING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Electronic cigarette (e-cigarette or vape) use among youth has raised concerns about its effects on mental health. According to the Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey [\(2023\)](#), over one-quarter of Ontario students in grades 7 through 12 have tried vaping in their lifetime.



## WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT VAPING AND MENTAL HEALTH?

Many youth report vaping as a coping mechanism for stress, anxiety, and depression. Studies show that youth who use e-cigarettes are more likely to experience mental health issues.

Nicotine (the addictive substance found in cigarettes and vapes) can have long-lasting negative impacts on the developing brain and it can affect memory and concentration. Nicotine dependence is also linked to a loss of control over mood and behavior, which can have harmful effects on mental health.

## WHAT CAN PARENTS/CAREGIVERS DO?

It is important to stay informed and engage in open discussions with youth about the risks of vaping. Providing support, a caring environment and resources for healthier coping strategies can empower young people to prioritize their mental well-being.

If you are concerned about your child vaping or want to learn more, the following resources can help:

- Speak to your health care provider.
- Visit [NotAnExperiment.ca/Parents](https://NotAnExperiment.ca/Parents).
- Download and/or visit [QuashApp.com](https://QuashApp.com).
- Review helpful tips from [Health Canada](https://HealthCanada.ca).

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# NICOTINE POUCHES: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Nicotine Pouches are the latest product from the commercial tobacco industry (commonly called “Big Tobacco”). Health Canada approved “Zonnic” nicotine pouches in July 2023 as a potential quit aid to help people trying to quit commercial tobacco products. Due to legal loopholes, they were approved as a natural health product. This makes nicotine pouches even more accessible to young people than vaping products.



## THREE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

1. Nicotine pouches resemble small teabag-like pouches and come in hockey-puck-sized containers similar to other products like chewing tobacco or snus. They are used by placing the pouch between the cheek and gum for a gradual release of nicotine.
2. Although nicotine pouches do not contain commercial tobacco, they do contain powdered nicotine, which is highly addictive. One pouch contains up to 4mg of nicotine, which is **as much nicotine as 3 to 4 cigarettes**. Nicotine is highly addictive and harmful to the developing youth brain.
3. Other nicotine pouches like “Zyn” with even higher nicotine levels, may be for sale without authorization in Canada, including online. Youth may also be exposed to illegal ads and see social media endorsements by athletes and influencers.

## NEW RESTRICTIONS TO PROTECT YOUTH IN CANADA

As of **August 28, 2024**, Health Canada imposed [new restrictions](#) protecting youth from the use of these products. The new measures include:

- It is now illegal for these products to be sold in places such as convenience stores and gas stations. Nicotine pouches can only be sold from behind a pharmacy counter by pharmacists or by individuals under the supervision of a pharmacist.
- Advertising or promotion, including labelling and packaging that could appeal to youth, are prohibited. Packaging must also include a nicotine addiction warning.
- Flavoured nicotine pouches are now prohibited, other than mint or menthol.

Talking with kids early about the harms of nicotine can help them make informed decisions about their health. [Preparing](#) for the conversation can help to have an honest, informed and supportive discussion. For more information visit [Tobacco, Vaping and Youth](#) or email [tobaccofreeliving@york.ca](mailto:tobaccofreeliving@york.ca).

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# BREATHE HEALTHY — LIVE HAPPY

## A Smoke and Vapour-Free Environment is Important to Keep Your Child Healthy

### WHAT IS SECOND-HAND SMOKE?

Second-hand smoke is the smoke that comes from a burning tobacco product. It contains more harmful chemicals than the smoke that is inhaled directly by a person who smokes because it does not pass through a filter (as might be found in a tobacco cigarette). Therefore, there is no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke. This affects everyone, including children and pets.

Keep your home and car smoke-free.

### WHAT IS SECOND-HAND AEROSOL?

Bystanders, including children and pets, can be exposed to the aerosol (commonly called the “vapour”) that is exhaled by those who vape. This is known as second-hand aerosol. Although vaping products may have fewer chemicals than tobacco cigarettes, vaping is not harmless.

Keep your home and car vapour-free.



### WHY ARE CHILDREN AT RISK?

Children are at risk because their lungs are still growing and developing. They breathe more quickly and as a result take in more of the dangerous chemicals for their size than adults.

Children's immune systems are less developed than adults. Thus, smoking in the home increases a child's risk of getting colds, ear infections, bronchitis, asthma and pneumonia.

For more information and/or quit resources, please visit [york.ca/tobacco](https://york.ca/tobacco) or email [tobaccofreeliving@york.ca](mailto:tobaccofreeliving@york.ca).

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# WHAT IS THIRD-HAND SMOKE?

Third-hand smoke includes the toxic chemicals from tobacco smoke that are left behind on surfaces, even after the cigarette, cigar or pipe has been put out. These chemicals get trapped in hair, skin, fabric, carpet, furniture and toys for numerous days after a cigarette is put out. It builds up over time, long after the smoke can no longer be seen or smelled.

Third-hand smoke particles can travel, settling on children's hair, clothing and backpacks producing a distinct odour. Opening a window or running a fan/air purifier will not get rid of third-hand tobacco smoke.



## WHAT ABOUT VAPING?

Some evidence has demonstrated that e-cigarette/vape use increases the level of nicotine and other chemicals on indoor surfaces. The health effects of exposure to aerosols from vaping on bystanders are still being studied. Wherever people should not smoke, they should not vape.

## PROTECT YOUR PETS

Tobacco and vaping products can be harmful to pets. They take in the toxins from third-hand smoke that settles on surfaces when they lick their fur or pick through their feathers. This can lead to a variety of health issues such as cancers, allergy symptoms, heart issues and skin and eye irritations.



## IF YOU SMOKE OR VAPE, PROTECT THOSE CLOSE TO YOU

- Keep your home and vehicle smoke and vapour-free.
- Smoke and vape outdoors and away from entrances or windows.
- Wash your hands after smoking or vaping.
- Wear a layer of clothing that can be removed after smoking/vaping, before going into your home.

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