

Personal Development and Wellbeing Newsletter January 2024

You may well have seen in the news recently that the government are proposing a ban on all single use vapes. This is to tackle the rising number of young people who are taking up vaping and to prevent vapes specifically being marketed at children.



Vapes were invented originally to support adults to stop smoking. It is already illegal to sell any vape to anyone under 18, but disposable vapes, often brightly coloured and smaller in size than refillable ones, are a “key driver behind the alarming rise in youth vaping” according to the government. Recent research suggests that “In March/April 2023 the proportion of children experimenting with vaping had grown by 50% year on year, from one in thirteen to one in nine” and “In 2023 20.5% of children had tried vaping, up from 15.8% in 2022 and 13.9% in 2020 before the first COVID lockdown.” [Use-of-vapes-among-young-people-GB-2023-v2.pdf \(ash.org.uk\)](#).

However, the dangers of vaping have still not fully been explored. Some are mentioned in this article [The hidden dangers of vaping - UK Addiction Treatment Centres \(ukat.co.uk\)](#) but it is clear that there are significant dangers with nicotine addiction, oral health problems and potential poisoning due to the industry not being regulated enough. There are some awful news stories out there, one of the most recent involving a 12 year old girl – you can find the information here [Never start vaping, says 12-year-old girl with lung damage - BBC News](#).

As a college we do have strict rules in place to protect our young people. Those found in possession of a vape face suspension and CCTV cameras around the college ensure that we monitor if vaping is taking place on the college premises, which again could end in suspension or even a permanent exclusion.

In order to support our learners in making the right decision we are having CGL [Newham Rise drug and alcohol service hubs \(changegrowlive.org\)](#) coming in to deliver assemblies to our KS3 and 4 learners after the February half term break.

We recognise that addiction is a concern and should parents / carers have any worries they should contact the relevant Head of Year in the first instance and online support can be found here:-

[Newham Rise drug and alcohol service hubs \(changegrowlive.org\)](#)

[Young people and vaping - Better Health - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

[How to Quit Vaping | Smokefree Teen](#)

[Why vaping is not really risk-free | Magazine | Vitality](#)



What Parents & Carers Need to Know about THE DANGERS OF VAPING

Data collected for ASH (Action on Smoking and Health) shows an increase in 11 to 17-year-olds experimenting with vaping: from 7.7% in 2022 to 11.6% in 2023. It's concerning that these age-restricted products are getting into the hands of under 18s as most contain nicotine, which can be detrimental to brain development and cause long-term addiction. Some schools have reported students having their focus in lessons affected by nicotine cravings; vaping in school toilets; and even trying vapes found in their local park. Raising awareness of the risks among young people could help to prevent these problems from escalating and reduce the number of young vapers.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

NICOTINE ADDICTION

Since they were initially developed to help people stop smoking, the vast majority of vape liquids contain nicotine. Not only is this a highly addictive stimulant, but it can also have detrimental effects on brain development in the under-25s. Nicotine can decrease the ability to pay attention, weaken impulse control, affect mood and increase the likelihood of substance addiction as an adult.



WHAT IS VAPING?

Vapes contain a liquid (vape juice/e-liquid) that is heated by a battery and evaporates, creating a chemical vapour which the user inhales. They can be disposable (once the liquid or battery runs out, the vape is thrown away) or rechargeable (the user replaces the liquid and recharges the battery on demand). Most vape liquids contain nicotine and other chemicals.

LACK OF AWARENESS

A proportion of young people tend to view vapes as harmless, mainly because of the products' appearance and the perception (often strengthened on social media) that "vaping is cool" and on trend. In many instances, young people don't fully appreciate the concept of addiction: that is, they aren't adequately aware of the risk of becoming hooked on nicotine before trying a vape.



POTENTIAL TOXICITY

Many vape liquids have been found to contain "heavy" metals such as lead, tin, nickel and (in some cases) mercury – all of which are toxic. These metals often take the form of tiny shards inside a device's liquid tank, which are then inhaled into the body. Some media reports have suggested these metals are particularly prevalent in illegally imported vapes which don't comply with UK regulations.



UNCLEAR LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES

The liquids in vapes also contain solvents, which can create carcinogens at the point of evaporation. Vapes were only introduced into the UK in 2005 – and, because of the relatively short timeframe involved, there is insufficient medical evidence to assess the long-term harms that regular inhalation of these chemical fluids might have on the human body.



ATTRACTIVE PACKAGING

The packaging of many disposable vapes is very appealing to young people, frequently echoing the colours and flavours of the sweets or fizzy drinks they're used to buying. There's a relative lack of regulation around vape marketing, and vaping is often depicted positively on social media – which can lead young people to develop favourable views of vaping and overlook the possible harms.



ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

In the UK alone, around 1.3 million disposable vapes go to landfill every week. Due to such significant numbers of these products not being recycled, their components – a lithium battery and a chemical liquid – pose a toxic risk to the environment, the ecosystem and wildlife. Vapes are also predominantly made of plastic and metal, materials that, of course, do not naturally decompose.



WIDER HEALTH CONCERNS

Studies are already showing a link between vaping and oral health problems such as tooth decay and gum disease. This is because vaping reduces the amount of saliva in the mouth, while increasing bacteria – resulting in bad breath and a build-up of plaque. There are also concerns that, in some users, vaping could lead to the development of asthma, a persistent cough and breathing difficulties.



UNREGULATED VAPING PRODUCTS

The number of retailers willing to sell vapes to under-18s is a worry, as the chance of these products being unregulated (and therefore containing illegal chemicals and higher levels of nicotine) is high. A related concern is that the mechanisms inside unregulated products are unlikely to have been tested and safety checked – presenting a possible fire risk if the liquid and battery come into contact.



SCARCE INFORMATION

The lack of information about the ingredients and potentially harmful chemicals in a vape is troubling. Some vape fluids (unregulated in the UK) contain traces of nuts, which can cause an allergic reaction or anaphylactic shock. To date, medical warnings aren't required on vape packaging – with only medical disclaimers being found on the websites of the various brands.



VAGUE INGREDIENTS LISTS

Early research has suggested that the chemicals used to produce some strawberry and banana flavour e-liquids can kill cells in the blood vessels and heart. These ingredients aren't identified on the packaging, instead falling under the umbrella term "natural and artificial flavourings". Such vague listings mean that consumers aren't aware of the liquid's content so can't identify potential risks.



Meet Our Expert

Run by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Healthy Schools Service (commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council), Catch Your Breath is a school-based project aimed at young people. Its goal is to embed a proactive, coordinated approach among both primary and secondary schools in discouraging smoking and vaping behaviours.



HEALTHY SCHOOLS
CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH

The National College

Source: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-61809924>



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