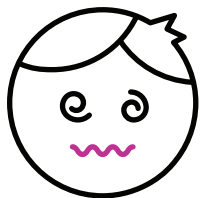


# VAPING - NICOTINE ADDICTION

## VAPING HARMS YOUR HEALTH

Vapes (e-cigarettes) contain harmful chemicals. NSW Health has tested vapes used by young people and found that they contain high levels of nicotine and other harmful substances, such as ethylene glycol, a chemical found in antifreeze. Vaping is linked to a range of health harms including:

**Nicotine addiction**



**Nicotine poisoning**



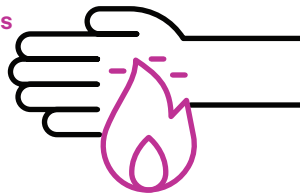
**Throat irritation and cough**



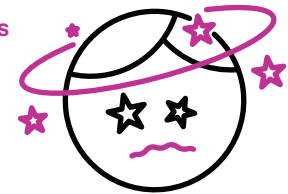
**Breathlessness**



**Serious burns**



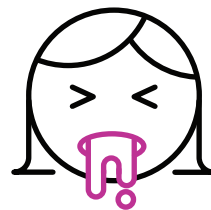
**Dizziness**



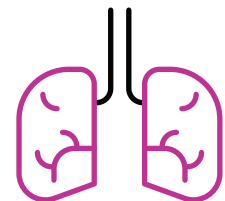
**Headaches**



**Nausea**



**Lung damage**



## MOST VAPES CONTAIN NICOTINE

Nicotine is the addictive ingredient in both tobacco and the liquid in vapes. It's what makes people keep smoking or vaping. Nicotine is one of the most addictive substances in the world.

Nicotine addiction (also known as nicotine dependence) can develop quickly. The more a person vapes (or smokes), the more their brain and body gets used to nicotine and the harder it is to stop.

Almost all vapes circulating in NSW contain nicotine, even

if nicotine isn't listed on the pack.

The amount of nicotine in vapes varies. How much nicotine you receive depends on:

- the type of vape
- the concentration of nicotine in the vape, and
- how deeply and frequently someone inhales.

When your body receives nicotine, receptors in the brain release a feel-good chemical called dopamine.

It is what makes nicotine addictive, because your brain will tell you to keep vaping (or smoking) to trigger the good feeling.

When someone becomes addicted to nicotine, their brain and body start needing nicotine to feel satisfied and work normally.

But the effect of nicotine wears off very quickly, which can trigger another craving to vape (or smoke). This can make it difficult to quit without support.



### Get the facts about vaping at [health.nsw.gov.au/vaping](https://health.nsw.gov.au/vaping)

If you think you or a friend might be addicted to vaping, there is help available.

See your GP, youth health service, or other health services for help with quitting vaping.

You can also call Quitline on 13 7848.

## YOU OR A FRIEND MAY BE ADDICTED TO THE NICOTINE IN VAPES IF YOU:

- vape soon after you wake up in the morning (within 30 minutes).
- vape alone.
- find it hard to concentrate if you haven't used your vape recently.
- need to use your vape to stay calm or be in a good mood, or you feel stressed, anxious or irritable if you can't vape.
- are interrupted by thoughts about vaping (cravings) when you're doing other activities.
- don't like leaving the house without your vape.
- struggle not to vape in places where it's not allowed (e.g. school, public transport).
- turn to vaping when you're stressed.
- haven't been able to quit vaping.

### NICOTINE USE CHANGES YOUR BRAIN

Regularly using nicotine vapes can cause changes to your brain development.

This negatively affects your learning, concentration, mood and memory.

It can also increase feelings of stress and worsen depression and anxiety.

Our brains are still developing until we're around 25 years old.

Using nicotine when you're a teenager and young adult can rewire your brain.

It can change the parts of your brain responsible for decision-

making, impulse control and mood regulation.

This can interfere with your mood and make you more likely to get addicted to nicotine and other drugs.

### You don't have to vape daily to develop an addiction.

### UNDERSTANDING NICOTINE WITHDRAWAL

When you first stop vaping, you can experience nicotine withdrawal symptoms, but they don't last forever.

Your brain will re-learn how to function without nicotine.

If you are addicted to nicotine

and go without vaping (or smoking), the nicotine level in your bloodstream drops.

This can cause unpleasant physical symptoms, increased anxiety, being irritable and strong urges to vape, known as cravings. These are signs of withdrawing from nicotine and can begin within a few hours of not using nicotine.

Nicotine withdrawal isn't dangerous and doesn't last for long – the first 2-4 weeks after you quit is usually the hardest as your brain and body get used to working without nicotine.

Having support from friends, family or a health professional can increase your chance of quitting for good.

### Nicotine withdrawal symptoms include:



Being **down** or **irritable**.



Being **unable** to **concentrate** or think clearly.



Feeling **anxious**, **restless** or **jittery**.



Not being able to **sleep** well.



Feeling **more** **hungry** than usual.



Not being able to **focus** on things apart from **vaping**.



### Get the facts about vaping at [health.nsw.gov.au/vaping](https://health.nsw.gov.au/vaping)

If you think you or a friend might be addicted to vaping, there is help available. See your GP, youth health service, or other health services for help with quitting vaping.

You can also call Quitline on 13 7848.

