

Can electronic cigarettes help me to quit smoking?



Health

Electronic cigarettes have not been approved by Australian health authorities as a smoking cessation aid or nicotine replacement therapy.

Some electronic cigarette manufacturers claim that electronic cigarettes can help a person to quit smoking. However there is limited evidence and mixed opinions among health experts about whether using electronic cigarettes can help people to quit smoking or not.^[1, 2]

There is limited research available on whether electronic cigarettes can help people to quit smoking. The body of research to date shows mixed results and unclear conclusions. Some of the studies show that electronic cigarettes do not assist people to quit or help to reduce the amount of tobacco cigarettes they smoke.^[3-4] Other studies have shown that they may assist people to quit, however the likelihood of people quitting using electronic cigarettes is similar to using Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) products or quitting 'cold turkey'.^[5-6]

It is important to remember that NRT has been assessed by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) for effectiveness and safety. However electronic cigarettes have not been assessed, so they should not be considered a safe product, or a suitable quitting aid. Further information on safety and other issues relating to electronic cigarettes is available on the [TGA website](#).

Some people use both electronic cigarettes and tobacco cigarettes.^[7-9] A recent UK study, for example, found that 80% of people using electronic cigarettes continued to smoke tobacco cigarettes.^[10]

Research shows that “*every cigarette you smoke is doing you damage*” and that there is not a great difference in health outcomes between a heavy smoker and a person who reduces the number of cigarettes they smoke.^[10-12] It is well known that people who quit smoking altogether have better health, with a longer life expectancy and fewer health problems or diseases than those who don't.^[10, 11]

Smokers who wish to quit should contact the NSW Quitline service on 13 7848 (13 QUIT) or access the ICanQuit website www.icanquit.com.au to obtain smoking cessation support.

References used in this fact sheet are available on the [NSW Health website](#).