

# VAPING - QUIT SUPPORT

## BECOMING ADDICTED TO NICOTINE CAN HAPPEN QUICKLY

Nicotine is one of the most addictive substances in the world. You don't have to vape daily to become addicted.

Some of the signs you or a friend may be addicted to nicotine include needing to vape soon after you wake in the morning (within 30 minutes), finding it hard to concentrate if you haven't vaped recently, or turning to your vape when you're stressed.

**It is possible to quit vaping (or smoking). People are more likely to quit successfully if they have help from a health professional.**

### Here are some practical tips young people have used to help them quit:

#### Pick a quit date

Make it a low-stress time to help manage withdrawal symptoms and cravings.



#### Make a quit plan

Plan how to manage withdrawal symptoms, cravings and slip-ups.



#### Get rid of your vapes

Remove anything else that may trigger the urge to vape (e.g. muting socials that feature vaping).



#### Tell your friends, family or a health professional

about your quit plan so that they can support you.

#### Quit with a supportive friend

If you vape with friends, it might be helpful to try to quit together.



#### Know what help is available

Decide if you want more support (like a health professional) and make contact if necessary.

#### Work out your 'vaping triggers'

Triggers might be places, feelings, times or other people who vape. Try to identify these and plan how you will manage them (see tips over page).



See your GP, youth health service, or other health services for help quitting vaping. You can also call [Quitline](https://www.quitline.nsw.gov.au) on 13 7848.

## MANAGING CRAVINGS IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF QUITTING VAPING

If you are addicted to nicotine (also called nicotine dependence) and go without vaping (or smoking), the nicotine level in your bloodstream drops and can cause withdrawal symptoms and strong urges to vape. This is known as cravings.

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

### 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)

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# TRY THESE STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU COPE WITH THE URGE (CRAVING) TO VAPE:



**Avoid your triggers** as much as you can in the first two weeks.



**Carry a snack with you** (e.g. an apple or a banana) and reach for this instead of vaping when you have a craving to vape. This can give you the dopamine hit your brain and body is craving without the harm of nicotine and keep your hands and mouth busy.



**Get active** - go for a walk or run.



**Ask for help.** Ask someone to support you, like a friend who also wants to quit, has quit or doesn't vape, or an adult you trust, like a parent/carer or school counsellor. A health professional can also help.



**Try deep breathing, meditation or other relaxation strategies.** For example square breathing, five count breath, or these relaxation exercises. A mindfulness app might give you some other ideas.



**Distract yourself.** Talk to a friend, play a video game, look at Instagram / Snapchat (delete content and contacts related to vaping), listen to music.

## WHAT TO EXPECT IF YOU TRY TO QUIT VAPING

The first 2-4 weeks after you quit is usually the hardest as your brain and body get used to working without nicotine.

The physical withdrawal symptoms usually get better during the first 1-2 weeks after quitting. But the psychological craving to vape can last longer. This is why having strategies to cope with cravings and support from those around you is important.

Remember that while nicotine withdrawal symptoms can be difficult, they don't last forever. Withdrawal symptoms are a sign your body is recovering. Your brain will re-learn how to function without nicotine.

A health professional can support you to quit. They can provide advice on whether you should try **Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)** to help you quit.



It's normal to slip-up when you're trying to quit. It might take a few tries to quit successfully. Each time you try to quit, you learn more about what works and doesn't work for you. Support from a health professional can help you get back on track.

## NICOTINE REPLACEMENT THERAPY (NRT) MAY BE AN OPTION FOR YOU

Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) (patches, gums, lozenges, mouth spray, inhalers) may help if you are finding it difficult to manage your cravings or to quit vaping. It can be particularly helpful in the first two weeks after quitting. It is safe to use in people aged 12 and over.

Nicotine Replacement Therapy is most effective when combined with support from a health professional who can provide tips for how to manage cravings and regularly review to see how you are going.

Speak to your GP or pharmacist for advice.



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## COPING WITH STRESS AND ANXIETY IF YOU VAPE

Studies have shown a link between nicotine addiction and increased stress and worsening depression and anxiety.

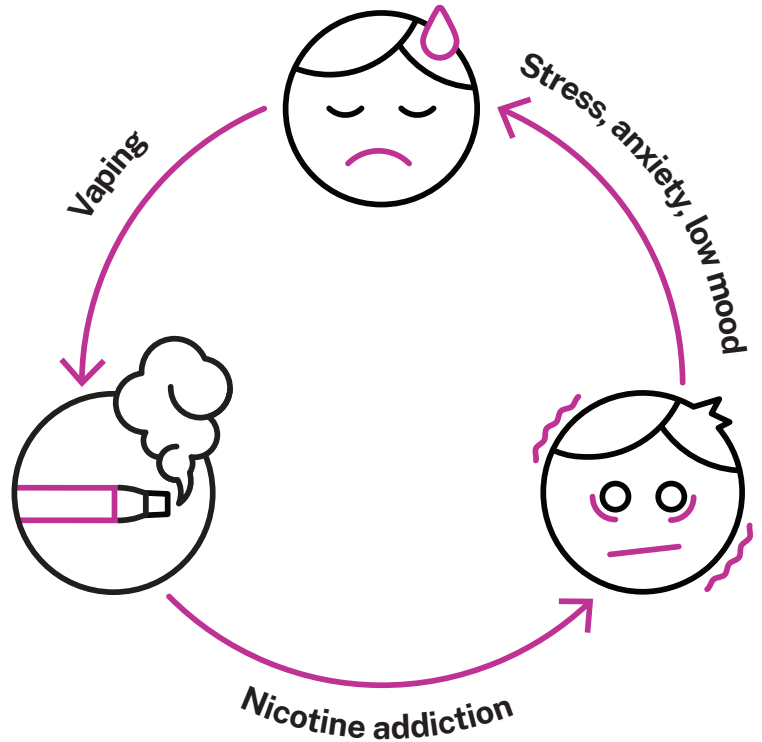
Some people vape to deal with stress and anxiety.

But nicotine addiction and the cravings that go with it can be stressful too. Stress and anxiety can trigger vape cravings and make it harder for you to quit for good.

This can create a cycle of stress and further nicotine addiction.

Looking after your mental health includes:

- Being aware of how you're feeling and what your mood is like.
- Keeping a diary of when, where, and who you vape with will help you understand your patterns of vaping.
- Keep track of your mood and how you're feeling and seek support if you're worried.



## HEALTHIER WAYS TO COPE WITH STRESS AND ANXIETY INSTEAD OF VAPING

- **Get active.** When you exercise, your brain releases similar feel-good chemicals to nicotine.
- **Stay busy and plan your day.** Create a schedule or stick to a daily routine.
- **Have fun.** Find ways to incorporate fun activities into your life, and make sure to do something you enjoy every day.
- **Talk** with supportive friends and loved ones.
- **Be positive.** Accept that there will be bad days, but that it won't always be like this.
- **Be present.** Focus on what you can control and stay in the moment. Don't worry or stress about things that might not happen.
- **Decaffeinate.** Caffeine can make you feel tense, jittery and stressed. This can make quitting harder, so consider reducing caffeine. This includes coffee, tea, caffeinated soft drinks and energy drinks.
- **Stop and breathe.** Interrupting the anxious feeling with conscious breathing can help you calm down and think clearly.



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