

VAPING – QUIT SUPPORT

Becoming addicted to nicotine can happen quickly

The nicotine in vapes and cigarettes is very addictive, but having the right support will help a young person's quitting journey. To give themselves the best chance of successfully quitting, it is important to have a plan and strategies in place to manage withdrawal symptoms and cravings. It may take more than one attempt to quit. A health professional can help them throughout their quit journey.

Tips to help support your young person to quit

Having a conversation is the first step in supporting someone to quit. This is an opportunity to let them know you are there to help and would like to have a meaningful conversation about their health and vape use.

Some strategies you could try to support your young person to quit:



Ask your young person why they vape, what they need to quit, and let them share how you or another trusted adult can best support them.



Help them to identify their 'vaping triggers'. Triggers might be places, feelings, times or other people who vape. Try to identify these and plan how they will manage them.



Work with your young person to identify how vaping is negatively impacting them (e.g. physical or mental health).



Help set goals and reasons to quit, and encourage them to write down and look at this list when they're finding it difficult.



Remind your young person that professional support is available to help create a quit plan and cope with cravings. Ask them if they would like to talk to a GP, school counsellor or Quitline, or if they would like you to do it on their behalf.



It also helps to set a good example by being vape and tobacco free yourself.

Ways to help my young person say 'no' and to quit, even when their friends are vaping

If your young person wants to say 'no' to vapes or is ready to quit, practicing and having pre-prepared responses or excuses not to vape is a practical way to help support them.

For example, if they are offered a vape, they can say:

- "No, I'm not doing that anymore."
- "No, it gives me a headache."
- "It's affected my lungs and I'm not interested in it anymore."

What to expect if your young person tries to quit vaping

When someone first stops vaping, they can experience nicotine withdrawal symptoms which are temporary and aren't dangerous.

Nicotine withdrawal symptoms can 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.

After someone quits, the physical withdrawal symptoms usually get better during the first 1-2 weeks. But the psychological craving to vape can last longer as their brain adapts and re-learns how to function without nicotine.

Young people should be reminded that nicotine withdrawal symptoms can be challenging, especially in the first few days or weeks of quitting, they don't last forever.

Withdrawal symptoms, while uncomfortable, are a sign their body is recovering.



Managing cravings is an important part of quitting vaping

There are many strategies a young person can use to assist with cravings to vape, these include:



Avoiding triggers as much as they can in the first two weeks.

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



Reach out for help. For example, a friend who also wants to quit or doesn't vape, or an adult they can trust, like a parent/carer or school counsellor. A health professional can also help.



Distractions. Encourage them to talk to a friend, play a video game, read a book or listen to music.

Physical activity – encourage them to walk or run.



Encourage deep breathing, meditation or other relaxation strategies. For example, **square breathing**, **five count breath** or these **relaxation exercises**.

A mindfulness app might give them some other ideas.

You can help your young person by regularly encouraging them to practice these strategies to cope with cravings and reminding them you're there to help if they need it.

Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) may be an option

Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) (patches, gums, lozenges, mouth spray, inhalers) may help if a young person is finding it difficult to manage their 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. NRT 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 your young person is going.

Speak to your GP or pharmacist for advice.

More about Quitline

The Quitline team are experts in helping people to quit vaping and smoking. A friendly counsellor who understands nicotine addiction can provide personalised advice, tips and the support to help your young person to quit.

Quitline
13 78 48

Where to get help

If you think a young person might be addicted to vaping, there is help available.

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

You can also call the **Quitline** on **13 7848**.



Do you know what they're vaping?

Get the evidence* and facts at health.nsw.gov.au/vaping

*All statements are backed by evidence which can be found on the website

