



A CLOSER LOOK AT E-CIGARETTES

COMMON QUESTIONS FINALLY ANSWERED

WHAT IS AN E-CIGARETTE?

Electronic cigarettes, or vapes, are battery-powered devices that deliver nicotine and/or flavored liquid through a vapor solution consisting of propylene glycol (a mineral oil also used in antifreeze). They are similar to cigarettes in shape, size and general appearance. Many e-cigarettes are rechargeable and use replacement cartridges or refill vials of vapor solution or e-liquid.

IS IT SAFER THAN SMOKING CIGARETTES?

The safety and efficiency of e-cigarettes has not been fully studied, so we cannot say whether or not they are a safer alternative to smoking cigarettes. Since the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not regulate these devices, there are many inconsistencies with quality control processes used by manufacturers. In 2009, the FDA found some cancer causing compounds in the liquid of e-cigarettes. The FDA also found that levels of nicotine in these products varied and often did not match the amount listed on the product label. Currently, more research is needed to determine both the short-term and long-term effects of using these devices.

DOES IT HELP PEOPLE QUIT SMOKING?

Unlike nicotine patches and gum, e-cigarettes are not approved by the FDA as an effective tool for smoking cessation. Although some have successfully quit

smoking with the use of these devices, others still continue smoking regular cigarettes. Additionally, inconsistent nicotine levels among these products can make cutting back more difficult as individuals may not be able to accurately monitor their nicotine intake.

WHAT ABOUT SECOND HAND VAPOR?

Exhaled vapor is a mixture of water, propylene glycol, nicotine, and some cancer-causing agents. Few studies have tested the health effects of second hand vapor, however, one study found that vapor increased the amount of particulate matter in indoor air. This is concerning because these fine particles can reach deep into the lungs and potentially cause respiratory irritation and difficulty breathing.

HOW MIGHT THESE PRODUCTS AFFECT SMOKING RATES?

E-cigarettes are gaining popularity on college campuses, and students that wouldn't otherwise smoke may be more inclined to try these products. This could result in nicotine dependence and lead to the use of conventional cigarettes. Health officials are concerned that e-cigarettes glamorize smoking, making it more acceptable for young people to start using tobacco products. According to the Centers for Disease Control, 76.3% of youth who used e-cigarettes within the past 30 days also smoked conventional cigarettes in the same period.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2013), Environmental Protection Agency (2013), Food and Drug Administration (2013, 2009)

