Smoking and Vaping



Introduction

Understanding the impact of smoking and vaping on your health is important for you to be fully informed and make your own decisions about whether you choose to smoke or vape. Smoking and vaping of any kind (cigarettes, vapes, shisha, joints, pipes and others) has an impact on your body and mind.

The harmful chemicals in tobacco smoke and vapes can cause long term health problems.

> *Lungs aren't adapted to inhale anything but fresh air.*
> *Many chemicals added to smoking and vaping products are harmful, addictive and toxic for your body.*

Nicotine is the addictive ingredient in both cigarettes and vapes. It's what makes

people keep smoking and 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 the substance and the harder it is to stop.

Big tobacco companies will do whatever it takes to get you hooked on nicotine, keeping you as a lifelong customer. These global corporations don't care about the harm they cause to your health—their only concern is profit.

For young people, nicotine can cause adverse impacts on adolescent brain development, impaired attention, learning and memory, and may worsen stress, depression and anxiety.

Research suggests that young people can become more easily addicted to nicotine than adults and that nicotine can harm the brain during adolescence and young adulthood until about age 25.

Smoking

It is important to look after your body. The damage caused by smoking at a young age can impact your life long-term.

When tobacco is burned, it releases over 7,000 chemicals, many of which are toxic and carcinogenic. Some of these include tar, formaldehyde, arsenic and lead which contribute to the health risks associated with smoking.

Smoking is known to cause serious health problems, including an increased risk of respiratory and cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, type 2 diabetes, and a variety of cancers. Smoking is associated with a 20 times higher risk of lung cancer than for those who do not smoke.

Nicotine is the addictive ingredient in tobacco. Addiction to nicotine is a major reason for continuing to smoke. When inhaled, nicotine quickly enters the bloodstream and reaches the brain within seconds, leading to immediate effects.

Over time, the brain becomes accustomed to nicotine, leading to cravings when levels drop. Withdrawal symptoms can include irritability, anxiety and difficulty concentrating, making it challenging to quit smoking.

Second-hand smoke from cigarettes (other people breathing in the smoke) can cause the same harm to people around you. It's important not to smoke around those most vulnerable, like children, babies, pregnant women and the elderly.

Smoking while pregnant increases the chance of development issues and health problems for the baby. It can also put the baby's life in danger and make labour more difficult. Quitting helps babies to grow by giving them more oxygen and nutrients to support better development and reduce their stress.

Learn more about smoking tobacco and nicotine and the impacts on your body at **Your Room** and the **Alcohol and Other Drug Foundation website**.

Vaping

Vapes are battery-powered devices that create aerosol from heated liquids (sometimes known as vape 'juices' or oils, e-juice or vape liquid).

> *Vapes can contain the same harmful chemicals found in cleaning products, nail polish remover, weed killer and bug spray – they just don't put them on the pack.*

Vapes come in a number of flavours such as blueberry or bubble-gum that make them appealing. Most vapes also contain nicotine, the same highly addictive substance found in tobacco cigarettes. Vapes are being marketed to young people by tobacco companies to get you addicted to nicotine.

Health harms associated with vaping include throat irritation, cough, breathlessness, dizziness, headaches, nausea, lung damage, and sleeplessness. Recent research has found that nicotine-based vapes are likely to cause cancer. If you vape you are five times as likely to take up smoking cigarettes.

Get the facts about vaping here.

Your Room and the NSW Health Vaping Toolkit have more information on vapes.

Nicotine pouches

Nicotine pouches are small sachets filled with powder containing synthetic or extracted nicotine and other ingredients such as sweeteners and flavours. They are designed to be placed between the lip and gum to allow nicotine to be absorbed through the lining of the mouth.

Nicotine pouches can have very high levels of nicotine. Nicotine is highly addictive, and use of nicotine can lead to nicotine dependence.

Further information can be found here Nicotine Pouches.

Shisha

Shisha tobacco is also dangerous for young people because nicotine, as well as many other chemicals can be found in shisha tobacco. As a result, smoking shisha is just as harmful to the body as cigarettes and vaping. People often unknowingly smoke much higher amounts of tobacco and nicotine through shisha pipes. You can find out more about shisha at Shisha No Thanks.

Resources to help you quit

Quitting smoking or vaping can be hard, and you don't have to do it alone. Here are some resources to help you quit:

- Talk to your GP
- Download the free app called Pave, designed to help people become vape-free. Download Pave for free from Apple and Android app stores.
- The Australian Government Department of Health has an app designed to help people quit called MyQuitBuddy.
- ・Call Quitline on 13 78 48 for private and non-judgemental support to quit. You can request a call back from Quitline too. Quitline has Aboriginal

counsellors, and they can use translators if you'd prefer to talk in a different language.

- Go to iCanQuit, an interactive website that allows smokers to share their stories about their experience with quitting.
- NSW Health – Vaping quit support factsheet
- Be Smoke-Free has a planning platform to help people quit
- WellMob has cultural resources and support for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

NSW Youth Health Services might have additional supports to help with quitting such as support programs that are designed for young people or access to free Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT).

If you decide you want to quit, here are some tips to help:

Try reaching out to a health provider such a NSW Youth Health Service

Think about the reasons you don't want to smoke or vape.

Be empowered by your own decision not to smoke or vape.

> *If you're worried about someone around you pressuring you to smoke or vape, think about what you will say before you're offered a cigarette or vape. You could say something like 'I just don't feel like one right now.'*

Support the other people around you to stop or reduce smoking or vaping – it can be easier to try and quit with a friend.

Avoid situations where cigarettes or vapes might be around or offered.

Choose to do something else when others start smoking or vaping. Practice quitting smoking or vaping. Not everybody can succeed the first time and that's okay – pick yourself up and try again!

What’s the law on smoking and vaping in public places?

Smoking and vaping are banned in areas where it is hard to avoid second-hand smoke and aerosol from vapes:

- all enclosed public areas such as shopping centres, cinemas and libraries, and on public transport vehicles such as trains, buses, light rail, and ferries.
- certain outdoor public areas such as:
- public transport stops and platforms,
- commercial outdoor dining areas,
- within 4 metres of access to a public building,
- spectator areas at sports grounds,
- public swimming pools,
- near children’s play equipment.

It is illegal to smoke or vape in a car with a minor under the age of 16.

For further information: NSW smoke-free laws



What’s the law on selling tobacco, vapes and pouches?

Tobacco

If you are under 18 years old, it is illegal for anyone to sell you any kind of tobacco product.

There are restrictions in place that relate to retailers who sell tobacco and non-tobacco smoking products. While they do affect the public, the penalties apply toward the retailer. Some of these include:

- A ban on the sale of tobacco products and non-tobacco smoking products to anyone under 18
    - All tobacco sold must be packaged correctly with appropriate health warnings
- A ban on the display of tobacco products, non-tobacco smoking products,

smoking accessories, in shops.

If you suspect that a retailer is selling illegal tobacco or selling tobacco to people under 18 years old, you can report this to NSW Health online or by calling the **Tobacco Information Line** on **1800 357 412**.

Vapes

There are restrictions in place that relate to the sale of vaping goods.

- People over the age of 18 can purchase vapes at pharmacies for the purpose of supporting smoking cessation or managing nicotine dependence.

- People under the age of 18 require a prescription to purchase vapes from a pharmacy for the purpose of supporting smoking cessation or managing nicotine dependence

- It is illegal for retailers including convenience stores, tobacconists, supermarkets and petrol stations to sell vapes.

Nicotine Pouches

There are restrictions in place that relate to the sale of nicotine pouches. It is illegal for retailers including convenience stores, tobacconists, supermarkets and petrol stations to sell nicotine pouches.

For a better understanding of the laws, make sure to visit NSW Healthand Youth Law **Australia**.

If you suspect that a retailer is illegally selling vapes or nicotine pouches, you can report this to NSW Health online or by calling the **Tobacco Information Line** on **1800 357 412**.