

Smoking



Introduction

The harmful chemicals in tobacco smoke can cause long term health problems. It is important to know what [smoking does to your health](#) so you can be fully informed and make your own decisions about whether you choose to smoke.

Smoking of any kind (cigarettes, e-cigarettes(vapes), shisha, , joints, pipes and others) has an impact on your body and mind. Lungs aren't adapted to inhale smoke and many chemicals added to smoking products are harmful, addictive and toxic for your body.

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

nicotine and the harder it is to stop.

Reasons people smoke

Lots of reasons can lead people to consider smoking. It's important to know about how smoking impacts your health

People might choose to start smoking for different reasons, including:

- **Being pressured or wanting to fit in with friends.**
- **To deal with stress and emotional troubles.**
- **Or they may have seen their family or adults around them smoke.**

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How is smoking harmful?

It is important to look after your body. The damage caused by smoking at a young age can impact your life long-term. The chemicals in tobacco and other smoke can damage your body in many ways.

For example:

- **Nicotine** is the addictive ingredient in tobacco and nicotine juices used in vapes. Research shows that young people become addicted to nicotine at a much faster rate than adults.
- **Nicotine** narrows your veins and arteries. This can damage your heart by forcing it to work faster and harder and slow your blood, reducing oxygen to your feet and hands.

- There are [chemicals in cigarettes](#) that cause inflammation in your body and impair the immune system.
- [Second-hand smoke](#)^[DS1] ^[RS(oH2)] (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 for the baby.

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

[E-cigarettes or vapes](#) are battery-powered smoking devices that create vapour from heated liquids (sometimes known as vape 'juices' or oils, e-juice or vape liquid). Using an e-cigarette is often called 'vaping'.

Vape aerosol is not water vapour. The main ingredient in vapes is propylene glycol, vegetable glycerine or glycerol. 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. Many vapes also contain nicotine, the same highly addictive substance found in tobacco cigarettes.

Many vapes contain nicotine making them addictive. Research suggests that young people can become more easily addicted to nicotine than adults.

Testing has shown that vapes labelled 'nicotine-free' often have high nicotine levels. People can think they are using nicotine-free vapes and can unknowingly quickly develop a nicotine addiction.

[Get the facts about vaping here.](#)

Just like cigarettes, selling vapes or e-liquids to people under 18 years of age is [banned](#) regardless of whether the product contains nicotine or not.

People over the age of 18 can get a valid prescription for nicotine vapes from a GP and can then purchase specified vapes at pharmacies or online. More information about [obtaining a nicotine vaping prescription here](#).

To find out more about quitting:

- Call [Quitline](#) on 13 78 48 for private and non-judgemental support on which methods would suit you best.
- Go to [iCanQuit](#), an interactive website that allows smokers to share their stories about their experience with quitting.
- Or [request a call back](#) from iCanQuit who has Aboriginal and multi-lingual advisors.

[Your Room](#) and the [NSW Health website](#) have more information on e-cigarettes and vapes.

Shisha

[Shisha tobacco](#) is also dangerous for young people. Shisha tobacco contains nicotine, as well as many other chemicals, and is just as harmful to the body as cigarettes. People often unknowingly smoke much higher amounts of tobacco and nicotine through Shisha pipes. Find out more about Shisha at [Shisha No Thanks](#).



What's the law on smoking?

If you are under 18 years old, it is illegal for anyone to sell you tobacco or e-cigarettes.

It is illegal to smoke and vape in all enclosed public areas and certain outdoor public areas such as public transport stops, commercial outdoor dining areas, public swimming pools and near children's play equipment.

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

[NSW Health](#) and [Youth Law Australia](#) have more information about the laws around smoking.

Quitting smoking or vaping

No matter your age, smoking and vaping are dangerous to your health and can be hard to give up. It is easier to avoid nicotine all together than it is to quit later,

once your body and mind have become dependent upon it.

If you decide you want to quit, consider these tips:

- 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.
- 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!

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

- [The Australian Government Department of Health](#) has an app designed to help people quit
- [Quitline](#) (13 78 48) has councilors trained in supporting people to quit smoking
- Talk to your GP
- NSW Health - [Vaping quit support factsheet](#)
- [Be Smoke-Free](#) has a planning platform to help people quit
- [Koori Quitline NSW](#) (13 78 48) have support services for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people to start their future without smokes.
- [I Can Quit](#) has resources to help you on your journey to quit for good
- [WellMob](#) has cultural resources and support for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.