PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Frequently Asked Questions About Electronic Smoking Devices

This information answers frequently asked questions about electronic smoking devices, such as electronic cigarettes.

What are electronic smoking devices?

Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes), vaporizers, vape pens, Juuls, hookah pens, and e-pipes are all electronic smoking devices. Electronic smoking devices are battery-powered devices that can look and feel like regular cigarettes. Instead of burning tobacco like regular cigarettes, electronic smoking devices use pods filled with a liquid containing nicotine, flavorings, and other chemicals. The battery heats up the liquid, turning it into a vapor or mist that you breathe in. Using electronic smoking devices is also referred to as vaping, vaporing, juuling, or e-smoking.

Are electronic smoking devices safe to use?

The long-term health risks of using electronic smoking devices are still unknown. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and other public health organizations agree that we need more research studies on the safety of electronic smoking devices.

While they don’t fill your lungs with harmful smoke like cigarettes do, electronic smoking devices still have nicotine and other chemicals in them. Vapors in e-cigarettes are made up of water as well as chemicals that can cause breathing problems in some people.

In 2016, the FDA started setting rules around the making, selling, and marketing of all tobacco products, including electronic smoking devices. People younger than 18 can’t buy any type of tobacco product. Health warnings have been placed on all tobacco products.

Is using a Juul safer than vaping?

Using a Juul isn’t safer than vaping. While Juuls come with liquid-filled pods in different flavors, these pods still contain nicotine. The nicotine in a Juul is more easily absorbed into your blood stream, making the vapor lighter and easier to breathe in. This makes you more

likely to breathe in more nicotine for longer periods of time.

The amount of nicotine in 1 Juul pod is the same as in a pack of cigarettes. Juul pods also have more benzoic acid compared to other electronic smoking devices. Benzoic acid is known to cause coughs, sore throats, abdominal (belly) pain, nausea (feeling like you're going to throw up), and vomiting (throwing up). Using a Juul isn't safer than using any other electronic smoking device and can actually be more harmful.

Is using an e-cigarette with Vitamin E acetate safe?

While vitamin E is found in many foods and skin care products, research studies show that breathing in vitamin E acetate may cause breathing problems. Do not add any substances, including vitamin E acetate, to electronic smoking devices, even if you buy them from a reliable store.

Can electronic smoking devices help people quit smoking?

We don't know whether electronic smoking devices can help or make it harder for people trying to quit smoking. They aren't an FDA-approved method of quitting. We

recommend that you use safe and proven methods, such as nicotine patches, gum, or lozenges.

Although research is still needed, some people are using electronic smoking devices to:

- Reduce the amount of harmful chemicals in regular cigarette smoke
- Help manage nicotine withdrawal cravings
- Cut down or quit smoking
- Keep from starting to smoke again (prevent smoking relapse)

While some people may smoke fewer regular cigarettes if they use electronic smoking devices, they may also be less likely to quit smoking altogether.

How can I quit smoking?

There are many resources available to help you quit smoking, including medications and counseling. MSK has specialists who can help you quit smoking. The program is open to everyone. The Tobacco Treatment Program (TTP) uses different methods to help you quit, including individual and group counseling. The tobacco treatment experts can also give you safe and effective medications to help resist urges to smoke.

For more information about our Tobacco Treatment Program, call 212-610-0507 or go to www.mskcc.org/cancer-care/counseling-support/tobacco-treatment.

You can also watch this video:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQ3hIl7bHIQ

For more information about quitting smoking, read our resource *Tobacco Treatment Guide: For Patients and Their Families* (www.mskcc.org/pe/tobacco_treatment_guide).

Can I use electronic smoking devices in the hospital?

No. Using electronic smoking devices in any MSK facility is not allowed.

Additional Resources

National Cancer Institute (NCI) Toll-free Quitline
877-448-7848
www.smokefree.gov

American Cancer Society (ACS)
800-227-2345
www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/tobacco-and-cancer

US Food & Drug Administration
www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/products-ingredients-components/vaporizers-e-cigarettes-and-other-electronic-nicotine-delivery-systems-electronic smoking devices

OnCancer: News and Insights from Memorial Sloan Kettering
www.mskcc.org/blog/are-electronic-cigarettes-safer-use-conventional-cigarettes

If you have any questions, contact a member of your care team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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