

# FOR TEACHERS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT E-CIGARETTES

## VAPING

Vaping is the act of inhaling aerosolized liquid from a device, sometimes called a vape pen or an e-cigarette. The device is filled with vape liquid and when it heats up, the liquid is aerosolized into millions of tiny droplets and then inhaled.

## E-CIGARETTES

Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) are battery-powered devices that can deliver nicotine and flavorings to the user in the form of an aerosol. E-cigarettes come in many shapes and sizes.

Although tobacco use among young people has declined, it is still very popular. Nationally, 3.6 million middle and high school students said they were current tobacco product users in 2017 and more than half used e-cigarettes. E-cigarettes are the most commonly used tobacco product among U.S middle and high school students. **In King County, twice as many youth are vaping as are smoking cigarettes; in 2016, 10% of 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders used e-cigarettes compared to 5% who smoked cigarettes.**

## JUULS AND POD-BASED VAPING DEVICES

JUUL is a discrete, pod-based e-cigarette that is shaped like a USB flash drive. JUUL is the top selling e-cigarette brand in the United States. JUUL's nicotine liquid refills are called "pods" and are available in several flavors such as Cool Cucumber, Fruit Medley, Mango, and Mint. All JUUL e-cigarettes have a high level of nicotine. According to the manufacturer, a single JUUL pod contains as much nicotine as a pack of 20 regular cigarettes. Other similar pod-based devices may contain as much nicotine as three packs of cigarettes. **Due to JUUL's discrete nature (the device plugs into USB ports and does not release a plume of vape similar to some other e-cigarettes) young people are using JUULs in schools, including in classrooms and bathrooms.**



JUUL e-cigarette plugged into a lap top USB port

## E-CIGARETTES ARE UNSAFE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The use of any tobacco product is unsafe for young people.

Virtually all e-cigarettes contain nicotine. **Nicotine is highly addictive and can harm brain development, which continues until age 25.** The effects of nicotine on the developing brain include reduced impulse control, deficits in attention and cognition, mood disorders, and addiction.

**Young people who use e-cigarettes may be more likely to use regular cigarettes.** According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), kids who use e-cigarettes may trigger a lifelong nicotine addiction and studies have shown that kids who use e-cigarettes are more likely to use other tobacco products in the

future such as combustible cigarettes, cigars, hookah, and smokeless tobacco. **Preventing young people from vaping can help a whole generation avoid a lifetime of nicotine dependence.**

## E-CIGARETTE INGREDIENTS

Many young people think vaping is safer than smoking combustible cigarettes, that e-cigarettes don't contain nicotine, that "pods" are just flavoring, and that e-cigarette aerosol is only water vapor. But, that isn't the case. **E-cigarette aerosol is not harmless.** It can contain harmful and potentially harmful ingredients. E-cigarettes may contain nicotine, volatile organic compounds, ultrafine particles, cancer-causing chemicals, heavy metals (such as nickel, tin and lead), and flavorings such as diacetyl, a chemical linked to a serious lung disease.

It is difficult for consumers to know exactly what e-cigarette products contain. For example, some e-cigarettes marketed as containing zero nicotine have still been found to contain nicotine.

## E-CIGARETTES ARE POPULAR AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

They taste good, and they're easy to hide. **Flavored tobacco products have been proven to both appeal to young people and facilitate the start of tobacco product use.** Tobacco companies know this, and they market flavored tobacco products to attract young adults. Almost all e-cigarettes used by youth are flavored to taste like menthol, alcohol, candy, fruit, chocolate or other sweets. JUULs and other pod-based devices are also discrete (they fit in the palm of your hand), making them appealing to youth who want to hide them from parents or teachers. They even charge when plugged into a laptop USB port. JUULs have an advantage over other e-cig models because they don't have a distinct odor and don't release plumes of vapor.

## HOW CAN I HELP?

**As a teacher, it is important to learn about vaping, the types of e-cigarettes, and the risks of all forms of e-cigarette use for young people.** With this knowledge, you can look for e-cigarette use in your classroom and school, and help share the facts about e-cigarettes with your students.

You can also work with your colleagues and partners to develop, implement, and enforce tobacco-free school policies.

Be an advocate for young adults in your school and community. **Reject youth tobacco prevention programs sponsored by the tobacco industry.** These programs have been found to be ineffective for preventing youth tobacco use.

And, don't forget parents. Research from the CDC tells us that parents have the greatest influence over their children when it comes to tobacco use. **Share what you know about e-cigarettes with parents.** They can help young people learn the facts about e-cigarettes.

Consider customizing this section with district/school specific information and share with your colleagues. Include information on your tobacco policy, and any existing efforts to prevent tobacco use among your students.

For more information visit: [www.kingcounty.gov/tobacco](http://www.kingcounty.gov/tobacco) or email [tobacco.prevention@kingcounty.gov](mailto:tobacco.prevention@kingcounty.gov)