

Vaping: Know the Facts

Classroom Activity



E-cigarettes were introduced to the US market in 2007 and marketed as a healthier alternative to smoking for adults despite the fact that there is no research to substantiate such claims. Since then, a culture of vaping — retitled as an epidemic by the Surgeon General in 2018— has emerged among adolescents. Between 2017 and 2018, the share of high-school students using e-cigarettes rose by 78%. One in five high school students report vaping in the past 30 days.¹ E-cigarettes recently surpassed conventional cigarettes as the most commonly used tobacco product among youth.²

This classroom activity simplifies the science about e-cigarettes and vapes in order to empower students with information and combat the myths perpetuated by the vaping industry.

Grade Level: Grades 6 - 12

Video Themes

Since e-cigarettes were first introduced to the US in 2007, scientists have found harmful ingredients in vapes, including:

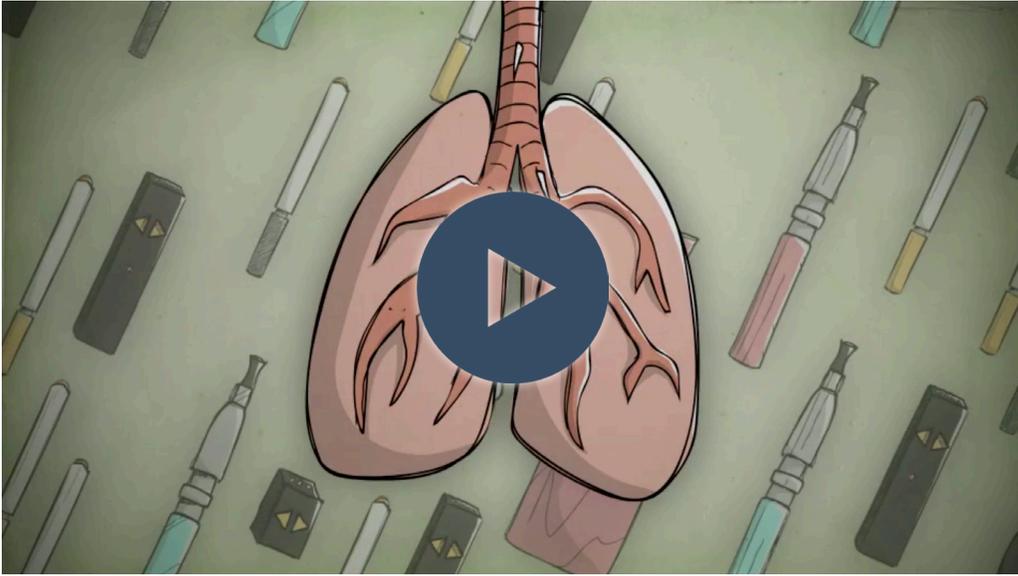
- ultrafine particles that can damage the lungs; ;
- flavorings that are linked to serious lung disease;
- volatile organic compounds (like benzene, which is found in car exhaust)
- and poisonous metals, like nickel, tin, and lead.

In addition to the harmful chemicals found in e-liquid that have been widely covered by the media, adolescents are uniquely at risk for long-term, long-lasting harms of nicotine, which can change the way synapses are formed, harming the parts of the brain that control attention and learning.

Adolescent nicotine use can increase the risk of substance misuse and addiction, mood disorders, and permanent lowering of impulse control.

Early evidence suggests that teens who vape are four times more likely to go on to use traditional cigarettes than those who don't.

Video



Visit www.addictionpolicy.org/vaping-facts

Discussion Questions

1. The US Surgeon General declared teen vaping a national epidemic. How have the recent lung illnesses and national discussion changed vaping in our community?
2. There are myths floating around about how vaping is a healthy alternative to smoking traditional cigarettes. What research from the video can help debunk this myth?
3. There are currently no regulations or safety standards for vaping products, but that hasn't stopped the vaping industry from promoting their product to increase the number of vapes sold. Would teens' opinions about vaping change if they knew that these companies were making false claims and using some of the very same advertising tactics that were formerly used (and then outlawed) by Big Tobacco?

Sources

¹ Gentzke AS, Creamer M, Cullen KA, et al. Vital Signs: Tobacco Product Use Among Middle and High School Students — United States, 2011–2018. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2019;68:157–164. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6806e1external> icon.

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults. A Report of the Surgeon General. 2016, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health: Atlanta, GA.