

HEALTH FACT SHEET

Updated October 2020

WHAT ARE E-CIGARETTES? WHAT IS VAPING?

E-cigarettes are devices that allow users to inhale an aerosol which typically contains nicotine, flavorings, and other additives or chemicals. E-cigarettes are sometimes called “e-cigs”, “e-cigars”, “e-pipes”, “e-hookas”, “mods”, “tank systems”, and most commonly, “vape pens” or “vapes”, the use of which is commonly called “vaping”.¹

An increasingly popular e-cigarette device is marketed under the brand “JUUL”. JUUL has been available for sale since 2015 and now is a top-selling e-cigarette brand in the United States. A JUUL device has a sleek design which looks similar to a USB drive and is used to deliver the liquid nicotine in a cartridge called a “JUULpod” available in multiple flavors. The use of a JUUL is sometimes called “JUUL – ing” and has

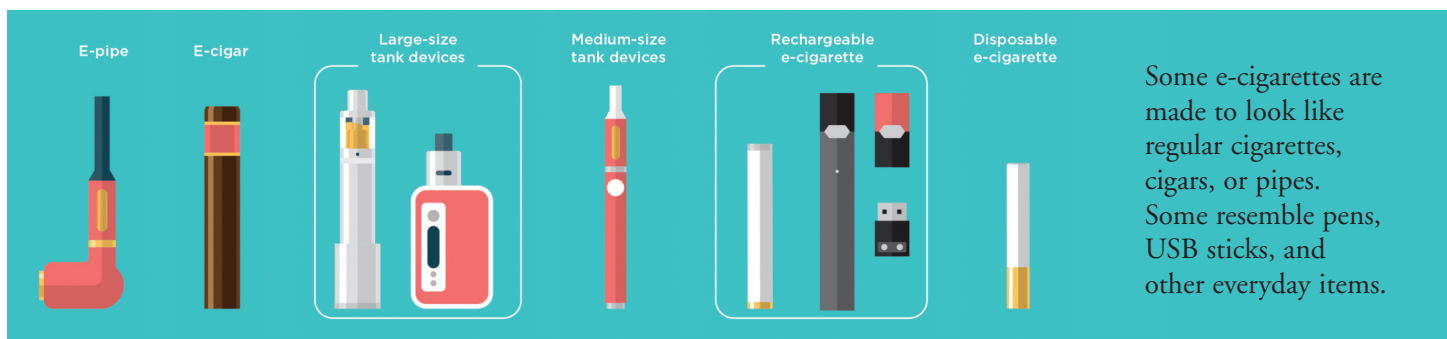
been popularized on social media.² Nationally, middle and high school students report the top reasons they use e-cigarettes are because a family member or friend uses, for the flavors such as mint, candy, fruit, or chocolate, and the belief that they are harmless.³

E-cigarettes contain fewer toxic chemicals than regular cigarettes, however, e-cigarettes are not harmless and have been found to contain heavy metals such as nickel, tin, and lead, diacetyl, which has been linked to lung disease, and other cancer-causing chemicals.^{4,5,6}

E-cigarettes contain nicotine which can lead to addiction and can cause harm to developing adolescent brains.⁷ Smoking and vaping put youth at increased risk of poor outcomes from COVID-19.⁸

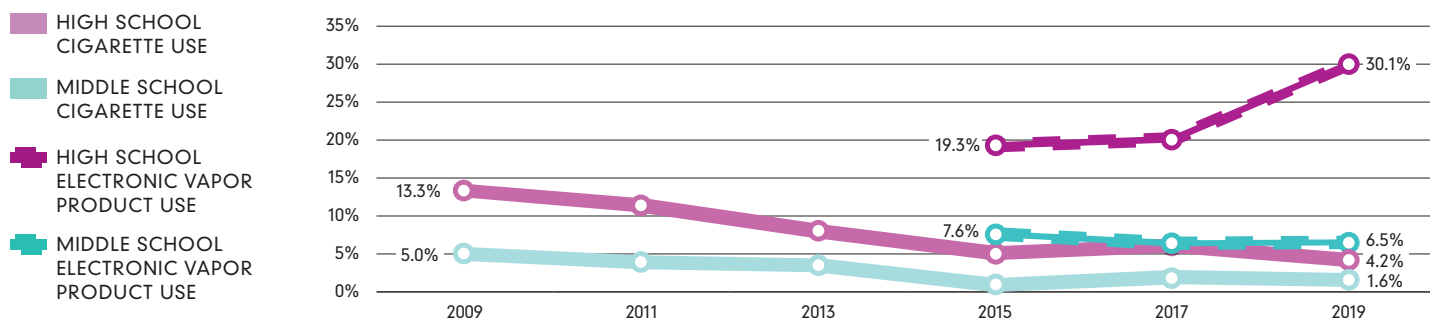
FAST FACTS

- Although e-cigarettes pose less risk to an individual than traditional cigarettes, e-cigarettes are harmful to youth.^{9,10}
- E-cigarettes contain nicotine, a highly addictive chemical that can harm brain development which continues through the teens and into the early to mid 20’s.¹¹
- Some e-cigarette pods can have up to as much nicotine as a pack of traditional cigarettes.¹²
- Some e-cigarette products that market themselves as having zero nicotine have been found to contain nicotine.¹³
- Young people who use e-cigarettes may be more likely to transition to regular cigarettes and increase the frequency and amount of cigarette smoking in the future.^{14,15}
- Bystanders can breathe in exhaled, or “secondhand”, aerosols from an e-cigarette user.¹⁶
- E-cigarette products can be used to inhale other drugs such as cannabis (marijuana).¹⁷
- Some defective batteries in e-cigarettes have caused explosions and fires resulting in serious injuries.¹⁸



BOTH MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS REPORT USING E-CIGARETTES AT MUCH HIGHER RATES THAN TRADITIONAL CIGARETTES

YOUTH CIGARETTE AND ELECTRONIC VAPOR PRODUCT USE*, MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, RHODE ISLAND, 2009-2019



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2009-2019.

Notes: *Use is defined as currently smoking cigarettes or an electronic vapor product at least one day during the 30 days before the survey. **Electronic Vapor Use was not asked on the YRBS survey before 2015.

WHAT ADULTS CAN DO TO PREVENT AND REDUCE YOUTH E-CIGARETTE USE

- **LEARN** about e-cigarettes including the types and shapes of devices, the health risks posed by using them, and the policies surrounding e-cigarette use in your school district.

CATCH My Breath, a free, online, evidence-based youth e-cigarette and JUUL prevention program, includes tools for parents and teachers to learn the basics about e-cigarettes and JUUL. You can download it for free at: www.catchinfo.org/cmbpresentation

- **TALK** to youth about the health risks associated with e-cigarette use and explain expectations and school policies surrounding e-cigarettes.

Tobacco-Free RI provides examples of local e-cigarette school policies at: www.tobaccofree-ri.org/electronic-delivery-systems.htm

- **BE A ROLE MODEL** and set a positive example by being tobacco- and e-cigarette-free.

The Rhode Island Department of Health offers free tobacco and e-cigarette cessation support through an evidence-based smokers' helpline: 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)

References

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