

VAPING & TEENS: A PARENT'S GUIDE

Know the risks. Spot the signs. Have the conversation.

Vaping might seem harmless, but it can seriously affect your child's health, wellbeing and future. Here's what every parent should know — and how you can help.

REAL
TALK.
HEALTHIER
TOMORROWS.



THE DANGERS

VAPING HURTS MORE THAN YOU THINK

DAMAGES THE LUNGS

Vaping can irritate the airways, reduce lung function and may lead to long-term breathing problems. It can also trigger asthma and make existing conditions worse.

AFFECTS BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Nicotine is highly addictive and can change the developing teen brain, affecting memory, focus, learning and mood. The younger the starting age, the greater the impact.

INCREASES RISK OF ADDICTION

Nicotine can rewire the brain, making it harder to resist cravings. Many teens who vape go on to smoke cigarettes or use other substances.

CAN HARM MENTAL HEALTH

Vaping is linked to higher rates of anxiety, depression and poor sleep — and can make existing mental health challenges worse.

CONTAINS HARMFUL CHEMICALS

Vape liquid isn't just "water vapour". It can contain nicotine, heavy metals (like lead and nickel), flavouring chemicals and other toxic substances. These can harm the lungs, heart and other organs.

IT MAY LOOK HARMLESS,
BUT VAPING CAN SERIOUSLY
AFFECT THEIR HEALTH, NOW AND
IN THE FUTURE.

THE LAW

VAPES AREN'T LEGAL FOR YOUR CHILD



It's illegal to sell vapes (including nicotine vapes) to anyone under 18 in the UK.



You can be fined up to £200 if you're caught buying, trying to buy or being in possession of a vape under 18.



It's also illegal to use vapes in schools, colleges and many public places (including some playgrounds, public transport and hospitals).



Just because someone gives your child a vape, doesn't mean it's OK. It's still illegal.

HOW TO SPOT THE SIGNS

Vaping can be discreet. Look out for:

- Smell of sweet or unusual scents (e.g. fruit, candy or mint).
- Small devices (often USB-shaped, can look like a pen or memory stick).
- Increased secrecy (e.g. spending more time in the bathroom or bedroom).
- New friends or online contacts who vape.
- Possible signs like constant coughing, throat irritation or a change in mood or behaviour.



If you're concerned, trust your instincts. Have an open, calm conversation and keep checking in.

WHY YOUNG PEOPLE VAPE

It's about more than just nicotine.



Peer pressure

They don't want to feel left out or be seen as 'uncool'.



Curiosity

They may think it's harmless or just a bit of fun.



Social media

They see influencers and online trends making it look appealing.



Flavours

Sweet and colourful flavours make it easier to try.



Stress or anxiety

Some young people vape to cope with pressure, worries or low mood.

It's not just about nicotine — it's about feeling accepted, relaxed or in control.

HOW TO TALK TO YOUR TEEN

It's not about blame — it's about support.

1

Choose the right time and place

Find a calm moment when you're not rushed or distracted. Show you're genuinely interested and not just checking up.

2

Listen without judging

Let them share their thoughts and feelings. They're more likely to be honest if they feel heard and respected.

3

Share the facts

Talk about the real risks — not just the rules. Use trusted sources and be clear about the dangers.

4

Set clear boundaries

Make sure they understand your expectations and the consequences. Be consistent.

5

Offer support

Talk about healthier ways to manage stress or fit in. Encourage activities, hobbies and positive friendships.

“

It's not about scaring them. It's about giving them the facts, so they can make safe, healthy choices.”

WHAT YOU CAN DO



Keep the conversation going — regularly.



Understand what vapes look like and what to look for.



Build their confidence and self-esteem.



Encourage healthy habits and positive role models.



Work with school, GPs and other support services if you're concerned.

Your support, awareness and open conversations can make a real difference.

HEALTHY MINDS.
BRIGHTER FUTURES.