

How to respond to common vaping statements

Parents are often met with statements about vaping 'safety' when they attempt to challenge their teen's use of vaping devices. Some of the most commonly reported of these are as follows:

- "But it's not smoking!"
- "It's just flavour, I don't vape nicotine."

- "Vaping is safer than smoking – wouldn't you rather me vape than smoke?"
- "I'm not hurting anyone, it's just water vapour."

Here are some possible responses that parents could use to address these statements:



"But it's not smoking!"

"That's correct, vaping is not smoking, but that does not mean that it is a 'safe' thing to do. E-cigarettes were invented to help smokers quit their habit. Tobacco smokers are highly likely to become addicted to nicotine and many try for years, some never succeeding, to stop smoking.

"E-cigarettes are another way of smokers getting their nicotine-hit without smoking – they are devices designed to deliver nicotine into a person's body. It doesn't matter whether nicotine is smoked or vaped – when you're young and your brain is still developing, nicotine is something that should be avoided. You may not be smoking but the earlier you start vaping nicotine, particularly in your early teens you're going to have a much harder time quitting the drug in the future. Do you want to vape for the rest of your life?"



"It's just flavour, I don't vape nicotine."

"Around 90% of all vapes purchased in Australia are made in China. It is not a well-regulated industry, particularly when it comes to the brightly coloured, flavoured disposable devices. These are mass produced – in fact, there's one factory in a city in China that produces half a million vapes per day – as a result, there are no standards and no regulations. When these are sold in Australia they rarely come with packaging or any information on what is contained in the device. There's no way you can know what's in it.

"Even when packaging is provided, the devices and the liquids are often not accurately labelled and even though nicotine may not be listed on the packaging of particular products, studies have found that some of these did actually contain the drug.

"Some of the vaping companies around the world are now owned by tobacco companies. Not so many people smoke as they did in the past and these companies need to continue to make money. Adding flavours, makes these products more attractive to more people and is one of the best ways to get new customers. You may think that you're just vaping a flavour but there is no way to be absolutely sure, not even if you look at the packaging."



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“Vaping is safer than smoking – wouldn’t you rather me vape than smoke?”



“I’m not hurting anyone, it’s just water vapour.”

“Vaping may be ‘safer’ than smoking but what does that really mean? Getting hit by a car is most probably ‘safer’ than getting hit by a truck but would you want either of those things to happen to you? Just because one activity is possibly safer than another doesn’t mean that it is a good idea to do it ...

“It took us hundreds of years to find out about the dangers of smoking and millions of people died over that time due to smoking-related illnesses. Vaping has only been around for less than 20 years and we have no idea about the long-term harms associated with the practice. When you ask me whether I’d prefer that you vape rather than smoke I have to be honest and tell you that I’d rather you do neither – I love you and I want you to be safe and healthy. In 50 years we may find out that there are no problems with vaping at all, but there is also the possibility that in the next few years we discover a cancer or a lung disease linked to e-cigarettes and the e-liquids that are used in them. We just don’t know.”



“It is true that when people first started vaping we believed that it was just water vapour but we now know it is actually aerosol containing metals, ultrafine particles and a range of toxic chemicals. We’re learning more and more about the contents of the aerosol that is exhaled by users. It’s true that it’s a lot less harmful than smoke from cigarettes but that does not mean it’s not a problem and it’s certainly not just water vapour.”

