

Talking to your child about vaping



Know your facts, start to talk....

It's good to talk and the more openly you can discuss vaping, the more likely your child will be able to come to you if, for example, their friends are pressuring them to try it or they've started vaping and want to give up.

It's a good idea to **know your facts**, and read about vaping so you can talk to your child about the risks in a balanced, informed way. There's no need to bombard them with info, just make sure you know what you're talking about.



Risks of vaping

Many young people who vape did not smoke cigarettes before they started vaping. But young people who vape are more likely to start smoking cigarettes than those who never vape.

- Vapes can contain nicotine and may quickly become harmfully addictive for young people.
- Nicotine addiction can affect young people's concentration and impact their ability to learn and study.
- Nicotine withdrawal can disrupt sleep and may cause headaches. It can also affect their mental health and mood.
- The long-term effects of vaping are still being researched. It's thought vapes can have a negative impact on the health of the heart and lungs, but at the moment there isn't enough evidence to assess this.
- Other harmful, illicit substances can be added to vapes such as Spice, Pine or THC. Sharing vapes could lead to young people inhaling these substances without realising.
- Disposable vapes have a negative impact on our environment due to their lithium batteries and hard to recycle components, and the increasing frequency in which these products are littered or thrown in the bin.

What to do if you think your child may be vaping

10 Top Tips

Spotting the signs

- Sweet smells like fruit or bubble-gum
- They're more moody, jittery or irritable than usual
- They're thirsty all the time
- They're coughing more than usual
- They're getting headaches
- You find a vape in their room or pocket
- Increased spending/requests for money

Tip #1: Stay calm

If you suspect or find out that your child has been vaping, you may well feel upset or angry. But try to stay calm when you talk to them about it, as shouting and accusing them never gets you anywhere. If you need to let off steam, try talking to a friend or family member first.

Tip #2: Don't panic

Many of the signs of vaping are also textbook signs that your child is growing up and as part of that process is experimenting with some behaviours and trying out some risks. So, don't put two and two together and make five.

Tip #3: Address the issue

If you find out that your child has been vaping it's important to address it and have a discussion with them.

Tip #4: Pick your moment

Pick a good moment when you've time for a proper discussion. For example, if you've just found vapes in their room, wait until you've calmed down before talking to them.

Tip #5: Look for 'teachable moments'

If a story about vaping comes up in the news or a programme you watch, or you walk past a vape shop, you could ask them what they think. Then make sure to listen to what they have to say and talk about it calmly and openly. Giving your child a lecture is unlikely to get you anywhere!

Tip #6: Plan what to say

Knowing the facts and sticking to your script could stop the conversation turning into an argument.

Tip #7: Try to stay positive

Try not to blame your child or to talk about worst case scenarios. Instead, focus on how you can support them.

Tip #8: Focus on their behaviour

It may help to talk about how your child is behaving rather than focusing on vaping. If they've been irritable or tired you could start by saying you've noticed this and then ask if there's anything they'd like to talk about.

Tip #9: Listen to what they have to say

Encourage your child to talk about why they feel the urge to vape. Understanding this could help you to support them. For example, if they say it helps them feel less stressed, you could help them find other ways to calm down. If they feel pressured into it, you could help them find ways to say no.

Tip #10: Put yourself in their shoes

Growing up is hard, and young people are under a lot of different pressures. Try to remember what it was like when you were a teenager and show that you're on their side and want to help them, not have a go at them.

For further information on vaping please go to www.pha.site/vaping



Public Health Agency
12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast BT2 8BS.
Tel: 0300 555 0114 (local rate).
www.publichealth.hscni.net

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