

# HOW TO TALK TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT VAPING

This guide is intended to help you have an important talk about vaping with your kids. Sure, they may think you are uncool and annoying for bringing this up, but it is important that you do. The health risks are real and they need you to fight for them. Have **The Vape Talk** with your kids today.

First things first. Before you have the conversation with your kids, know the facts.

## WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

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You've probably heard a variety of terminology, but don't let that confuse you. JUUL, vapes and vape pens are all forms of e-cigarettes and they're all dangerous.

There is a misconception that vapes are just flavors and steam. Not true. Vaping is highly addictive. In fact, one JUUL pod contains as much nicotine as 20 cigarettes, or about one pack of cigarettes. Vape pods also contain toxins and carcinogens, including formaldehyde, propylene glycol and acrolein, which can cause irreversible lung damage. And because vaping is new, we're still uncovering its long-term health effects.

All these risks are being funded by a familiar foe, Big Tobacco. Altria, the owner of Marlboro, is the primary investor in JUUL. Now these tobacco firms are targeting your kids. Parents are in the best position to protect their kids against such powerful and dangerous opponents.

## SIGNS YOUR KID MIGHT ALREADY BE VAPING

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About 40% of kids have tried vaping and it's likely their parents don't even know. Vaping is easy to hide. Unlike traditional cigarettes, e-cigarettes don't leave the telltale scent of tobacco. But there are clues.

Look for changes in your kid's behavior. They might start cutting back on caffeine or getting frequent nosebleeds. Also look for signs around the house. Vape pens can look like markers or USB flash drives and have disposable flavor pods, so look for discarded pods in the trash. And since vape pods come in lots of flavors, take note of any new sweet scents in their rooms or on their clothes.

# TIPS FOR A

# HEALTHY DISCUSSION

## CHOOSE THE RIGHT TIME AND PLACE

Choose a time when your kid won't feel rushed and a place where he feels relaxed, like when you're riding in the car or sitting at the dinner table. By choosing a place you both feel comfortable, you'll both be more inclined to open up.

## APPEAL TO THEIR GOOD JUDGEMENT

Your kid makes smart decisions every day. Resisting the temptation to vape can be one of them. Compliment her good judgement. Remind her that she is an independent thinker who doesn't have to be influenced by peer pressure. Tell her you're proud of her courage and principles.

## ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Instead of asking yes or no questions, ask open-ended questions that encourage participation. If you're genuinely curious, your kid will be less likely to get defensive.

# CONVERSATION STARTERS

Here are some suggested conversation openers. Remember, don't blow up if they share things you didn't expect to hear. Listen to their answers, ask more questions and keep the lines of communication open.

**1**

**Are a lot of kids vaping at your school? Are your friends vaping?**

Be sure you don't react, just listen.

**2**

**What do you think about vaping?**

You may hear him say, "It's harmless – it's just flavored water vapor," but it's not and you'll share more about that next.

**3****Do you know what is in JUUL pods and other vapes?**

Then tell her you have been studying and here's what you know:

- Vape pods contain harmful ingredients, including formaldehyde, propylene glycol and acrolein (ə-**'krō**-lē-ən), which causes irreversible lung damage. It's not just water vapor, and it's not safe.
- Even the Surgeon General has established how dangerous vaping is. JUUL commercials and paid influencers will try to make it look safe, but it is not.
- Most vaping manufacturers, including JUUL, are owned by tobacco companies, the same companies that sell addictive cigarettes, which cause millions of deaths. These companies are now focusing their marketing efforts on replacing former cigarette customers with kids, by hooking them on e-cigarettes.

**4****Do you know how vaping can damage your health?**

Tell him why that matters.

- Vaping is smoking – one JUUL pod can contain as much nicotine as a pack of cigarettes.
- Once you start vaping, nicotine addiction follows – and quitting is really hard. (At this point, if you're a smoker or former smoker, you may want to share your own experience with nicotine addiction.)
- Your lungs will suffer the effects – maybe not today, but eventually. There are multiple cases in the news of kids having seizures from e-cigarette nicotine poisoning. We don't even know yet how bad this is going to be for your health.

**5****Do you know the other ways vaping affects your life?**

Tell her why she should care.

- Over time, the chemicals in e-cigarettes will affect your attention span, memory and lungs.
- Once you're addicted, vaping will be the boss of you. Even when you don't want to do it, you'll have to do it. And that's only good for the tobacco companies.
- You're smarter about health than previous generations were. Vaping goes against all the other healthy choices you're already making.

**ONCE IS NOT ENOUGH**

Consider this an ongoing conversation. When you first bring up the subject, your kid might be caught off guard and reluctant to engage. But once you open the door to the topic, he'll be more inclined to talk to you about it later. If your kid is still skeptical, here are some links you can suggest so he can make up his mind for himself.

Surgeon General: [E-Cigarettes.SurgeonGeneral.gov/](https://www.e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/)

CDC: [CDC.gov/tobacco/basic\\_information/e-cigarettes/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/index.htm)

American Lung Association: [Lung.org/ecigs](https://www.lung.org/ecigs)

**OFFER HELP**

If your kid is already vaping, they may be addicted to nicotine. Give her the help she'll need to quit. Call the PA FREE Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visit [PA.QuitLogix.org](https://www.pa.quitlogix.org). There are also cessation apps designed for kids, including [QuitSTART](https://www.quitstart.org).