

Your Guide to Vaping

Vaping is much less harmful than smoking and is one of the most effective ways to help people quit. But many people are still unsure about how safe or helpful it really is.

This guide will give you the facts about vaping—what the science says about its safety and how well it works—so you can make an informed choice.

How vaping helps you quit

Safer than smoking

Vaping doesn't burn tobacco, so it produces fewer harmful chemicals than cigarettes. Vapes are far less harmful than smoking—especially when bought from trusted retailers.

Cuts cravings

Vapes with nicotine help manage withdrawal symptoms and reduce the urge to smoke.

Feels familiar

Vaping mimics the hand-to-mouth action of smoking, making it easier to switch.

Expert approved

Health bodies like the NHS support vaping as a quitting aid when used properly.

Cheaper

Vapes cost less than cigarettes or nicotine patches/gum and are widely available.

Vape safety

Vaping: A popular way to quit smoking

Vaping (using e-cigarettes) is now one of the most common and helpful ways to stop smoking in the UK.



Is vape smoke harmful?

Vape smoke does contain some harmful substances, but they are found in much smaller amounts than in cigarette smoke.

What makes vaping different from smoking?

Unlike cigarettes, vapes don't burn tobacco and don't produce tar or carbon monoxide — the two main things in cigarette smoke that cause most smoking-related diseases.

Why does burning matter?

The key difference is that vapes don't involve burning. It's the burning of tobacco that causes most of the serious health problems linked to smoking.

Is second-hand vape smoke dangerous?

So far, there's no proof that second-hand vape smoke harms people nearby, and if there is any risk, it's likely to be very low.

Long-term risks



- Vaping has not been around long enough for the long-term effects to be clear, but current evidence suggests it is much less risky than smoking.
- The healthiest option is not to smoke or vape; people should aim to stop vaping when they feel confident they will not relapse to smoking.
- Vaping is not risk-free and is not recommended for non-smokers or young people.
- Vaping products are regulated for safety and quality in the UK.

What's in vapes vs tobacco smoke



Here's how the chemicals in vape aerosol compare to those in tobacco smoke:

Chemicals	Vapes	Tobacco smoke
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	None	Present — harmful to heart and lungs
Particulate Matter	10 times lower; mostly harmless liquid droplets	High; solid particles linked to lung disease
Free Radicals	Less than 1% of tobacco smoke levels	High; cause oxidative stress
Nitric Oxide	None	Present — contributes to breathing issues
Tobacco-Specific Nitrosamines	100 to 1,000 lower	High; known carcinogens
Volatile Organic Compounds	Only formed when **frying* e-liquid (overheating)	High; many are toxic or carcinogenic

*'Frying' refers to overheating the e-liquid, often due to high power settings, low liquid levels (dry hits) and long puffs.

How the risks compare



- Vaping exposes users to far fewer toxins and at much lower levels than smoking cigarettes.
- Most of the harmful chemicals in tobacco smoke, including tar and carbon monoxide, are not present in vape aerosol.
- UK experts and Public Health England estimate that vaping is at least 95% less harmful than smoking tobacco.

Vaping as a tool to quit smoking

**Twice as likely
to quit smoking**

Smokers who use a nicotine vape are roughly twice as likely to quit successfully compared with those using other nicotine replacement products, such as patches or gum.

**74% quit
rate**

In local stop smoking services, quit success rates can achieve 74% for those using a vaping product as part of their quit attempt alongside behavioural support.

**Easier to
switch**

Vaping helps address both the nicotine addiction and the behavioural routines of smoking, making it easier for many people to switch.

**Expert
recommended**

The NHS, National Centre for Smoking Cessation and Training (NCSCT) and NICE recommend that people use vapes for as long as they help prevent a return to smoking.

Different types of vapes



Vape Pens

- These are second-generation e-cigarettes
- They have a transparent, refillable cartridge or tank



Mods

- These are third-generation devices
- They are rechargeable and refillable



Pod Mods

- These are fourth-generation devices
- They are refillable and rechargeable, and include nicotine salts

What types of vapes are banned?



- Any vape that is not both refillable and rechargeable
- Devices with non-replaceable coils or sealed pods that cannot be refilled or replaced

Helpful tips for using a vape to quit smoking

-  Vaping is for adults only – it's illegal to sell to under-18s.
-  Use your vape whenever you need it to manage cravings and withdrawal.
-  Pick the right device and nicotine strength – your Stop Smoking Coach can help.
-  Remember: Nicotine isn't the main cause of smoking-related harm – vaping is far less harmful than smoking, though not risk-free.
-  Plan ahead – prepare to stop vaping when you're ready.
-  You can combine vaping with nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) if needed.
-  In places where vaping isn't allowed, fast-acting NRT like sprays or 4mg lozenges can help keep cravings under control.

Talk to your Stop Smoking Coach

If you have questions or need help choosing the right vape or nicotine strength, your Stop Smoking Coach is there to support you. Everyone's quit journey is personal, and your coach can help you find what works best for you.

For further reading

NHS: Vaping to quit smoking

Public Health England: Vaping better than nicotine replacement therapy for stopping smoking