

CAUGHT UP IN THE VAPE

HOW E-CIGS REWIRE YOUR BRAIN



Vapes, also called e-cigarettes, are battery-operated devices that heat a liquid and produce an aerosol.¹

Vapes come in many forms, including disposable devices, refillable devices, and devices with pre-filled cartridges or pods.² The liquid inside goes by many names, including vape juice, e-liquid, or e-juice.²

Vaping and mental health don't mix.

When asked why they vape, most teens mention feelings of stress, anxiety, and depression. However, these feelings aren't being relieved by vaping. They're just being delayed or even made worse. Nicotine can cause anxiety and irritability when used continuously. That goes for other substances, too. Marijuana use is also linked to mental health conditions like depression and social anxiety.³

Don't Cloud Your Future

Beyond the legal issues of vaping before the age of 21, vaping has been shown to affect the health of teens and young adults.



Vaping nicotine and/or cannabis can affect brain development until the age of 25.^{4,5} Nicotine can harm the parts of the brain that control attention, learning, mood, and impulse control.



Teens who use nicotine may be at increased risk for future addiction to other drugs.⁵



The association between cannabis use and schizophrenia, a serious brain disorder that causes people to interpret reality abnormally, is stronger in people who start using at an early and frequently.^{6,7}

Beware of the FAKE & SWITCH

Unregulated vape juice mixes, the kinds that can be mixed like a DIY recipe or bought in a store, are a real risk.⁸ These mixes can have fillers or additives - like chemicals, THC, or even fentanyl - to make the juice more addictive.

Today's vape market is also dominated by products with high doses of nicotine. When teens try to quit, they may use other tobacco products to relieve their symptoms, which can lead to a cycle of nicotine addiction.⁵

References:
1 Helpful Tips for Protecting Youth from the Harms of Vaping. CDC.gov. Accessed March 18, 2026. <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/tobacco-features/back-to-school.html>
2 About E-cigarettes (Vapes). CDC.gov. Accessed March 18, 2026. <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/e-cigarette/about.html#:~:text=E%2Dcigarettes%20are%20sometimes%20called,or%20other%20types%20of%20products>

3 National Academies of Sciences Engineering and Medicine. The health effects of cannabis and cannabinoids: Current state of evidence and recommendations for research. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press; 2017. Accessed May 20, 2026. <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/24625/the-health-effects-of-cannabis-and-cannabinoids-the-current-state>
4 Cannabis and Teens. CDC.gov. Accessed March 18, 2026. <https://www.cdc.gov/cannabis/health-effects/cannabis-and-teens.html>

FIND A HEALTHIER WAY TO UNWIND



Use these tips from other teens to find better ways to manage the stresses, anxieties, and pressures of teenage life:⁹

- 1 Understand your risk.** Mental health challenges are a major problem teens face. From social media to the pressures of school and social life, there's a lot on your plate.
- 2 Take action to protect yourself.** You have the right to step back from situations or people that are disturbing your peace. It's also okay to lean on friends and family when you're struggling. If you feel that you don't have the support system you need, look for encouragement from trustworthy mental health accounts on social media to give you a daily dose of support.
- 3 Find ways to cope without turning to drugs or alcohol.** How you choose to deal can have an impact on your mental and physical health in the present and in your future. If you're dealing with stress, choose to channel your energy into your passions. Be yourself. Do the hobbies and activities that feel right and bring you the most joy. These could be sports, video games, reading, art, spending time with your pets, cleaning - anything that's positive and puts you in a better mental space.
- 4 Recognize you aren't in this alone.** Nearly all of us will experience a mental health challenge in our life. You can call, text, or chat the 988 Lifeline if you or someone you know is experiencing emotional distress for confidential support.



Most teens who currently vape want to quit.¹⁰ If that's you, there are a lot of free community, state, and national resources that can help,¹¹ including:

1-800-QUIT-NOW
<https://teen.smokefree.gov/>
www.cdc.gov/quit
www.988lifeline.org

References:

5 Health Effects of Vaping. CDC.gov. Accessed March 18, 2026. https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/e-cigarettes/health-effects.html#cdc_generic_section_6-overview
6 Schizophrenia. SAMHSA.gov. Accessed May 5, 2026. <https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/what-is-mental-health/conditions/schizophrenia>
7 Effects of Cannabis Use on Human Behavior, Including Cognition, Motivation, and Psychosis: A Review. Accessed May 5, 2026. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/fullarticle/2488041>

8 The E-cigarette or Vaping Product Use-Associated Lung Injury Epidemic: Pathogenesis, Management, and Future Directions: An Official American Thoracic Society Workshop Report. Accessed May 4, 2026. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9819258/#sec26>

9 The Free Mind Formula. CDC.gov. Accessed May 18, 2026. <https://www.cdc.gov/free-mind/tips-for-youth/formula.html>

10 Tobacco cessation behaviors among U.S. middle and high school students, 2020. Accessed March 18, 2016. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34930566/>

11 11Resources to Help Youth Reject or Quit Vaping. CDC.gov. Accessed March 18, 2026. https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/e-cigarettes/youth-quitting.html?_cid=OSH_misc_M567

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