

VAPE CHECK

Worker's notes

This tool is designed to help a worker have a conversation with someone who frequently vapes nicotine. It is not designed to be used with people who have never vaped, only vaped once or twice, or people who are vaping for the purpose of smoking cessation or the management of nicotine dependence.

This icon  indicates a conversation point.

A guide to using this tool can be found at insight.qld.edu.au/dovetail

This tool will provide you with some useful information and practical tips about vaping. It only takes about 10-15 minutes to complete.

1 START HERE



Disposable vapes are banned in Australia. Pharmacies are the only place to legally access vape devices, e-liquids, parts and accessories.

In the past 3 months, how often have you smoked tobacco?

- Never
- Once or twice only
- A few times a month
- A few times a week
- Daily/almost daily

In the past 3 months, how often have you vaped?

- Never
- Once or twice only
- A few times a month
- A few times a week
- Daily/almost daily

What age did you first start vaping?

Since you started, has your vape use:

- Increased?
- Decreased?
- Stayed the same?



Vaping doesn't have any health benefits for people who don't smoke. For people who do smoke, switching to vaping may be less harmful in the short-term, but it's still not completely safe. We don't know what long-term vaping does to your health, so ongoing use is not recommended. Pharmacies can sell vapes to people trying to quit smoking or to help manage a nicotine addiction. If you're under 18 in Queensland, you'll need a prescription from a doctor or nurse practitioner (other States and Territories may have different rules).

2

The following questions will help us work out if you are becoming addicted to nicotine (tick all that apply)

- Have you ever tried to stop vaping, but couldn't?
- Do you need to vape if you're feeling stressed?
- Do you ever have strong cravings/urges to vape?
- Is it hard to keep from vaping in places where you are not supposed to, like school, work or home?
- Do you find it hard to concentrate, or do you get anxious, restless, or irritable if you haven't vaped in a while?
- Do you feel stressed if you can't find your vape or it runs out?

Answering yes to any of these may indicate possible nicotine addiction.



What do you think about this?

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If you buy your vapes, how often do you buy a new one? (skip if not relevant)

How much does each vape cost you?

How much would this be per year? (You may need a calculator for this section.)

What else could you do with this money?

What do you like about vaping?

e.g. "it's fun to do with friends", "I like the taste", "I find it relaxing"

It's good to know the reasons why you vape.

What are the not so good things about vaping?

e.g. "I can't leave the house without it", "I'm getting in trouble at school"

It's helpful to think about ways to reduce negative impacts (even if you're not ready to stop) and keep an eye out if these impacts are getting worse or if the list is growing.

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On a scale from 1-5, how worried are you about your vaping?

1 2 3 4 5

Not worried

Very worried

What would you like to do about your vaping? (tick)

- I want to cut back vaping
- I want to quit vaping
- I don't want to cut back or quit vaping right now (skip to section 6)

On a scale from 1 - 5, how worried are others about your vaping? (e.g. family/ friends)

1 2 3 4 5

Not worried

Very worried

If you want to cut back or quit, how confident are you that you can make it happen?

1 2 3 4 5

Not confident

Very confident

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I want to cut back or quit



Cutting back or quitting can be easy for some people and tricky for others. You may experience withdrawal symptoms – things like difficulty concentrating, being irritable, feeling anxious or having cravings to vape. These withdrawal symptoms will fade within a couple of weeks.

My goal is to... (e.g. cut back to 1 vape a month, stop vaping at school/work, improve my fitness, quit by Christmas)

I'm making a change because...

People who could support me...

Things that might make it tricky to reach my goal... (e.g. "I find it hard to say no if a friend offers their vape", "If I get stressed, I will want to vape")

Some steps to help reach my goal are... (Tips: Include steps that use your support people. Come up with a plan to deal with the challenges listed above.)

Other strategies you might like to try (tick)

Resist the urge to vape with the "3Ds"

Delay: If you can delay the decision to vape for a few minutes or more, a craving (urge) can pass on its own.

Distract: It's easier to delay the decision if you are doing something to distract yourself (e.g. message a friend, go for a walk, look at social media, listen to music, have a lolly the same flavour as your usual vape, drink some water).

Deep breathing: Breathing and other relaxation techniques can help you to stay calm during a craving.



Remember: cravings are like a stray cat – if you feed them, they will keep coming back.

Learn ways to relax

Learning relaxation strategies can help reduce stress/anxiety and may improve overall physical and mental health. Apps on relaxation strategies or related topics like mindfulness can be really helpful.

Reduce the temptation to vape

If your goal is to quit vaping, throw your vape out. If your plan is to cut back, put your vape out of reach between use so you're not tempted to use it more. To avoid vaping in places you shouldn't (like schools/public indoor spaces), leave your vape at home. If this is too difficult, consider nicotine replacement therapy (NRT - like nicotine patches, gum, sprays, or lozenges). These can help reduce cravings and other nicotine withdrawal symptoms.



You can get NRT at supermarkets or pharmacies without a prescription. In Queensland, you may qualify for free NRT through Quitline. NRT can be used by people 12 years and older. It works best when combined with other strategies (like those listed above), you use it in the correct way, and find the right product and strength to fit your needs. A health professional, like your doctor, or a Quitline counsellor (call 13 78 48) can help you work this out. People under 12 years should check in with a doctor before using NRT.

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Reducing harm from vaping

The long-term harms of vaping are unknown, so the safest option is to not vape at all. However, for those who choose to vape, here are some strategies to help reduce risk of harm. **Tick the strategies that you think might work for you:**

Yes No Maybe



Only purchase vapes from a pharmacy

Vapes from a pharmacy are regulated, meaning they must meet set product standards. Vapes from the illicit market are unregulated and may increase exposure to banned/harmful ingredients. Buying vapes from the illicit market may also put you in risky situations.



Quit tobacco smoking

If you also smoke cigarettes, it's advised to switch to vaping only. This may reduce harm in the short to medium term. Once you feel confident you won't go back to smoking tobacco, consider quitting vaping too.



If it tastes bad – stop using it!

A bad or strange taste indicates something is not right and is linked with increased harm. So throw bad tasting disposable vapes away. With reusable vapes, replace the coil/wick or pod and refill with new e-liquid.



Monitor your mental health

Nicotine can impact your mood and make conditions like anxiety or depression worse. Monitor your mood and seek support if you're worried.



Set limits on your vaping

Try taking fewer puffs and put your vape out of easy reach between use.



Only use vapes as they're intended to be used

It's unsafe to modify e-liquids or devices. This can cause chemical reactions linked to increased harm. Tampering with batteries can cause explosions or fires.



Maintain re-usable devices

The coil/wick will wear out and require frequent replacing. Avoid mixing different e-liquid types or flavours (use separate pods/tanks). Keep batteries away from heat and out of direct sunlight. Recharge with the charger provided; other chargers can overload the battery, causing fires.



Avoid using your device dry

When a vape runs out of e-liquid, the internal parts start to overheat/burn. This creates toxic chemicals and when inhaled (called a 'dry hit'), can be harmful. Top up re-fillable devices when the liquid is low. Allow enough time for the wick to fully soak before use when the coil/wick is replaced.



Avoid vaping in places it's not allowed

Vaping may cause harm to other people so respect their choice not to vape and avoid vaping in places it's not allowed. If you struggle with this, you might be addicted to nicotine. Even if you're not ready to quit, nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) like nicotine patches, gum, spray, or lozenges may help you to avoid vaping in places you're not allowed by reducing cravings. (See previous page on how to access NRT.)

My next steps will be to... (Tips: Think about how you might get started on your plan to cut back/quit or when you might implement some of the strategies above. Choose easier strategies first to get started).

It might also help to...

Catch up again to discuss my progress

See a doctor or other health professional

Call Quitline 13 78 48 for free confidential support on vaping or smoking

Warning

Store nicotine liquid away from children and pets. Nicotine liquid can be absorbed through the skin and is toxic when ingested. Call the Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26 if you are concerned, and call Triple Zero (000) in an emergency.