

E-cigarettes

E-cigarettes are battery-operated devices that heat a liquid into an aerosol for users to inhale. The liquid usually contains nicotine and flavourings, along with other additives.

The act of using an e-cigarette, referred to as vaping, mimics the use and sometimes appearance and taste of a conventional cigarette but does not contain tobacco. The global use and availability of e-cigarettes have increased, with many traditional cigarette manufacturers selling e-cigarettes.

DEMOGRAPHICS

E-cigarettes are very popular with young people, with more high school students using e-cigarettes than regular cigarettes.

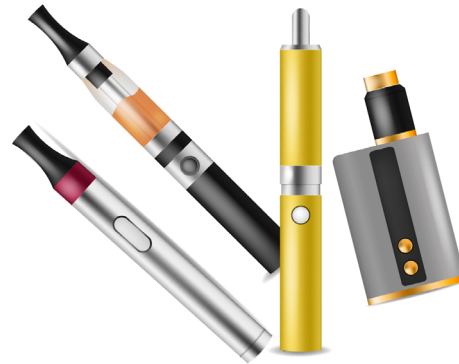
Many people try e-cigarettes to assist in smoking cessation or reduce cigarette consumption. Although e-cigarettes are promoted as a less harmful alternative to traditional cigarettes, they are not approved as a smoking cessation aid in Canada. Individuals wanting to quit tobacco should consult a dental hygienist about safe and effective treatment options.

DANGERS OF E-CIGARETTES

E-cigarettes can also be used to deliver cannabis and other drugs. Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine and usage could result in nicotine addiction.

Besides nicotine, e-cigarettes contain other harmful ingredients, including:

- ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs;
- flavourants such as diacetyl, a chemical linked to lung disease;
- volatile organic compounds such as benzene, which is found in car exhaust; and
- heavy metals such as nickel, tin and lead.



EFFECTS ON ORAL HEALTH

Vaping increases the risk of [tooth decay](#), [gum disease](#), and mouth sores/ulcers. The nicotine in e-cigarettes can also harm oral health. Nicotine can reduce blood flow to the gums, decreasing oxygen and nutrients needed to stay healthy. Nicotine inhibits saliva production, leading to [dry mouth](#), increased bacteria buildup, and [tooth decay](#). Saliva can become thick and sticky over time. Nicotine stimulates jaw muscles and increases [bruxism \(grinding\)](#). Dual e-cigarette and cigarette use increases the risk of oral diseases.

NEGATIVE HEALTH EFFECTS

Other negative health effects include:

- airway, mouth, and throat irritation;
- decreased lung function;
- allergic reactions;
- potential respiratory inflammation; and
- burn injuries and teeth fracture from exploding battery-powered vaping devices.

ROLE OF THE DENTAL HYGIENIST

Individuals who vape or are considering vaping should consult a dental hygienist about its effects on oral and overall health. Dental hygienists know the impact of e-cigarette use on the mouth and can provide valuable information to help people make informed decisions.

As professional health-care providers, dental hygienists are primarily concerned with promoting good oral health. Dental hygiene is among the largest of the regulated healthcare professions in the province. In Ontario all dental hygienists are registered with the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario, which regulates the profession to ensure the public receives safe and ongoing comprehensive oral care.

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