E-cigarettes and Vaping: Tips for Parents

The Basics

- E-cigarettes produce a vapor. Using an e-cigarette is called vaping.
- Most e-cigarettes do not look like cigarettes. Some look like pens or small handheld flashlights. They come in many different colors and designs, and some are decorated with things like sequins.
- Teens typically call them egos, vape pens, or e-hookah rather than e-cigarettes. Often teens don’t realize these are all types of e-cigarettes.
- It is illegal to sell e-cigarettes to anyone under the age of 18 in Washington State. Often teens get tobacco products from other people.
- Studies show e-cigarettes contain harmful chemicals and those labeled as having no nicotine contained nicotine.¹
- E-cigarettes are currently unregulated by any government health or safety agency.

The Teen Brain and Nicotine

- Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, which is the same drug that makes cigarettes addictive. Teens can become addicted to nicotine quickly.²
- Nicotine changes the way the teen brain works which can negatively impact learning.³
- 90 percent of all drug addictions start in the teen years.⁴

E-cigarettes and Drug Use

- E-cigarettes can also be used to vape marijuana and other drugs.
- Marijuana oil can be vaped, which nearly eliminates the odor, making it difficult to detect.


- You are the #1 influence in your child’s life.
- Research shows that teens who have conversations with their parents and learn the risks of using drugs are 50% less likely to use them.
- Talk early and often.
- Set clear expectations.
- Discuss rules and enforce reasonable consequences.

Read more about talking with your teens at: http://www.drugabuse.gov/family-checkup

¹. Summary of Results: Laboratory Analysis of Electronic Cigarettes Conducted by FDA. http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/ucm173146.htm
⁴. The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University. Adolescent Substance Use: America’s #1 Public Health Problem, June 2011.