

E-Cigarettes

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Many people are now considering e-cigarettes to be a safer alternative to smoking traditional cigarettes, which has dramatically increased its popularity. Between 2014 and 2015, CDC studies found e-cigarette use among high school students increased by 19 percent, with more teens using e-cigarettes than cigarettes. The data becoming available does not support its safety and in fact is downright scary.

What exactly are E- cigarettes?

E-cigarettes are devices that use a heating element from a refillable cartridge that releases a chemical filled aerosol. The liquid from which the aerosol is derived contains nicotine from tobacco and usually includes different flavorings, colorings and other chemicals. This help increase their popularity, particularly among adolescents and young adults.

What is contained in E-cigarettes?

What is particularly concerning is that it is not clearly known what all is exactly contained in e-cigarettes. The level of toxins seems to vary among the different brands. The FDA recently found detectable levels of toxic cancer causing ingredients used in antifreeze in two leading brands. A 2014 study found formaldehyde, a significant carcinogen, in several higher voltage e-cigarettes. The flavors found in e-cigarettes are also concerned. The manufactures will state that their safety has been proven, but what they neglect to point out is that their safety has been determined for ingestion in foods, not inhaled in the lungs!

While the amount may vary among brands, all e-cigarettes contain nicotine. Another study conducted in 2014 found that the amount of nicotine was often substantially higher than what was listed on the package. Therefore, yes, e-cigarettes can be highly addicting. In addition, it is important to realize that nicotine has been proven to have a negative impact on adolescent brain development. Its use in adolescent and young adulthood can cause lasting cognitive and behavioral impairments.

Can E-cigarettes help with quitting smoking?

The simple answer is no. The FDA has not approved any any e-cigarette as a safe or effective tool for smoking cessation. Instead it is often used in conjunction with traditional cigarettes and as already pointed out, due to the nicotine contained in e-cigarettes is often just as addicting.

The bottom line on e-cigarettes is that here are still many unknown and variations on what is contained in its vapors. What is known is that it contains nicotine, which is highly addicting and can negatively impact brain development and has many additives which are clearly toxic. Educating our youth about the dangers of this is key to protecting this generation from its hazards.