

Frequent vaping can harm mental and physical health

In 2023, 26 per cent of youth in grades seven-12 in British Columbia reported having vaped, most having their first experience as young as 13. Of those youth who have tried vaping, 57 per cent reported having vaped in the last month, and 15 per cent reported vaping daily.

What are vaping products?

Vaping products are known by many different names such as electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes), vapes, vape pens, dab pens, pod-mods and others, and come in many shapes, sizes and device types. They can look like everyday items such as USB sticks or pens.

They're battery-powered devices that heat an e-substance, liquid, or e-juice to create a vapour (aerosol). Inhaling the vapour which typically contains nicotine is called "vaping".

Vaping is not harmless.

Here are some of the negative effects.

- Nicotine is highly addictive and has effects on blood pressure and heart rate. Children and youth become dependent more easily than adults.

- Inhaling aerosols from vaping products can cause coughing, wheezing, respiratory diseases, lung injury and worsen existing lung conditions such as asthma. The long-term effects are not fully known. Heavy metals and a number of chemicals present in vaping products are harmful and some are known to cause cancer.

- Many youth who vape start at a young age, which can impact brain development, memory, mood, concentration and impulse

control.

- Vaping has been associated with depression, suicidality, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and behavioural problems.

- Vaping may lead to an increase in youth using other substances.

- Contact with nicotine-containing e-liquids can irritate the eyes, nose or skin and can be poisonous if swallowed, which is especially concerning for children and youth. Symptoms of nicotine poisoning include nausea, vomiting and dizziness and in extreme cases can be fatal.

- Some youth vape cannabis. Cannabis vapes can have very high concentrations of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the main ingredient in cannabis that causes impairment (feeling "high"). High amounts of THC increase the risk of developing problems such as paranoia, psychosis and cannabis hyperemesis syndrome (severe nausea and vomiting), sometimes called "greening out."

What is legal?

All legal vapes in B.C must contain nicotine or cannabis (e.g., cannot contain only flavoured chemicals), and are available at both age-restricted stores and all-age stores such as convenience stores. You must be 19 years of age or older to buy them. Cannabis vapes are only sold in age-restricted stores.

Vaping as a way to quit smoking.

Vaping products are often promoted as a way to help a person quit smoking regular cigarettes. Although the vapour from



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regulated vape products contains fewer toxins than regular cigarette smoke, the inhaled vapour is not harmless, and vaping is not a regulated or medically approved quitting aid.

Vaping adds additional risk for those who do not already smoke. Vaping products model smoking behaviour to non-smoking youth and have the potential to create nicotine dependency in people who have never smoked.

How to support youth to prevent, delay or reduce vaping.

Be supportive and expect setbacks. Here are some ways you can be a role model and offer support:

- Have open conversations about vaping. Try to understand their beliefs and see where you can offer facts that may help them better understand the risks.

- If you use tobacco, cannabis or vaping products yourself, be honest with your child about the risks and any regrets,

difficulties and health effects resulting from your experience.

- Talk with your child about ways they might be able to refuse vaping in a way that makes them comfortable.

- If you vape, try quitting or reducing vaping for your own health and the health of your children. If you want to quit smoking or vaping, contact *Quit Now* for supports.

- If you vape, do not vape around your children to avoid exposing them to second-hand vapour.

- Keep vapour products out of reach of children and youth.

- Talk to your family doctor or visit an Urgent and Primary Care Centre for advice and resources.

For more information and additional resources visit:
<https://www.fraserhealth.ca/health-topics-a-to-z/children-and-youth/substance-use-in-children-and-youth/vaping-products>

Is screen time making your kids nearsighted?



There is evidence that the more time children spend reading up close, the higher the risk of myopia.

(NC) As parents, caregivers and educators gear up for the back-to-school season with new school supplies and new learning adventures, one growing concern stands out: the potential harmful effects of excessive screen time on children. With digital devices becoming an essential part of both education and leisure, it's important to understand how prolonged exposure to screens can impact young minds and bodies.

Myopia, also known as nearsightedness, is the need for glasses to see at a distance. From an eye-health perspective, the development of myopia in children is a growing issue worldwide. There is evidence that the more time children spend reading up close – whether that is on smartphones, tablets, books or doing

homework – and the less time they spend outside, the higher the risk of myopia.

In the past two years, four-in-ten Canadians reported that their child experienced one or more symptoms around their eyes and vision – with the leading factor being screen time, according to a survey by the Canadian Ophthalmological Society. Some of the symptoms from overusing screen time include: eye irritation (dry eyes, itchy eyes, red eyes), blurred vision, headaches, backaches, neck aches and muscle fatigue.

Here are four ways to protect children's eyes during screen time use:

1. Use the 20/20/20 rule. For every 20 minutes that you spend on the screen, look at least 20 feet in the distance for at least 20 seconds.

2. Sometimes, people who have difficulty with near focus can develop eye strain from looking at a small screen too closely, such as when reading a book or magazine. Wearing appropriate prescription glasses can help with this.

3. Limit near-screen time (closer than 30 cm) and spend more time outside, as natural light helps reset the eyes.

4. Ensure regular vision screenings to assess for myopia and get treatment if needed.

Find more resources and information on eye health at seethepossibilities.ca.

Mable Elmore, MLA VANCOUVER-KENSINGTON

CONSTITUENCY OFFICE:
6106 Fraser Street,
Vancouver, BC V5W 3A1

HOURS:
 Mon. to Thurs. – 10am to 4:30pm
 Friday by appointment only.

Phone: 604-775-1033
Mable.Elmore.MLA@leg.bc.ca



BEST WISHES FOR THE Autumn Holidays & Celebrations

Sept. 22-24 – Rosh Hashanah
 Sept. 30 – National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
 Oct. 1-2 – Yom Kippur
 Oct. 13 – Thanksgiving
 Oct. 20 – Diwali
 Nov. 11 – Remembrance Day