e-cigarettes

# What are e-cigarettes?

## Electronic cigarettes, also known as e-cigarettes, e-cigs or vapes are battery powered devices which heat liquid (called e-liquid) into an aerosol which is inhaled into a person’s lungs.

## E-liquids are often flavoured.

## Using an e-cigarette is commonly referred to as ‘vaping’. Some e-cigarettes look like conventional cigarettes, cigars or pipes and others look like everyday items such as pens or USB sticks.

## Are e-cigarettes safe?

* Public health authorities across Australia share concerns regarding the safety and health impacts of e-cigarettes, as well as the way e-cigarettes are marketed to young people.
* The manufacture of e-cigarettes is not regulated.
* Limited information is available about the ingredients contained in e-liquids (including nicotine) and the health effects of long-term use.
* Research has found that some e-liquids sold as “nicotine-free” have contained nicotine.
* The Department of Health provides information relating to the [health impacts of smoking e-cigarettes](https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Electronic-cigarettes-e-cigarettes).

### Are e-cigarettes legal in WA?

* Sales of e-cigarettes containing nicotine are not legal anywhere in Australia.
* It is possible to possess e-cigarettes containing nicotine in Western Australia when this is prescribed by an authorised health practitioner.
* In WA, managers of public places may choose to prohibit e-cigarettes when smoking is prohibited.
* The Therapeutic Goods Association offers information on [nicotine vaping products](https://www.tga.gov.au/nicotine-vaping-products).
* The Department of Health offers [general information about e-cigarettes](https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Electronic-cigarettes-e-cigarettes).

### Use of e-cigarettes by young people

* [Research](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/australian-secondary-school-students-alcohol-and-drug-assad-survey-2017) from 2017, revealed 14 per cent of secondary students aged 12 to 17 years in Australia had used e-cigarettes.
* Of these students, 48 per cent had never smoked a tobacco cigarette before their first vape.
* Around 25 per cent of these students who had vaped before ever smoking, reported later trying tobacco cigarettes.

### What schools can do about e-cigarette use

* Schools can address e-cigarettes through their occupational safety and health procedures.
* The Department of Education’s [Standards for Maintaining a Smoke-free Workplace](https://www.education.wa.edu.au/dl/nqr383m) addresses e-cigarettes in the same way it does tobacco to provide a smoke-free environment for staff, students and visitors.
* Schools can access professional learning, consultancy, as well as teaching and learning resources from the Department to assist with implementing a whole school approach to alcohol and other drugs education which includes:
  + developing effective whole-school drug education plans;
  + delivery of prevention education relating to alcohol and other drugs (including vaping);
  + providing early intervention to support young people with issues related to alcohol and other drug use (including vaping); and
  + engaging with parents about alcohol and other drugs.