

E-cigarettes and Youth: What Educators and Coaches Need to Know

WHAT ARE E-CIGARETTES?

Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) are battery-powered devices that deliver nicotine, flavorings, and other ingredients to the user. Using e-cigarettes is sometimes called “vaping.” E-cigarettes do not create harmless “water vapor” – they create an aerosol that can contain harmful chemicals.

HOW MANY YOUTH ARE USING E-CIGARETTES?

- E-cigarettes have been the most commonly used tobacco product among U.S. youth since 2014.
- In 2020, CDC and FDA data showed that at least 3.6 million U.S. youth, including about 1 in 5 high school students and about 1 in 20 middle school students, used e-cigarettes in the past 30 days.

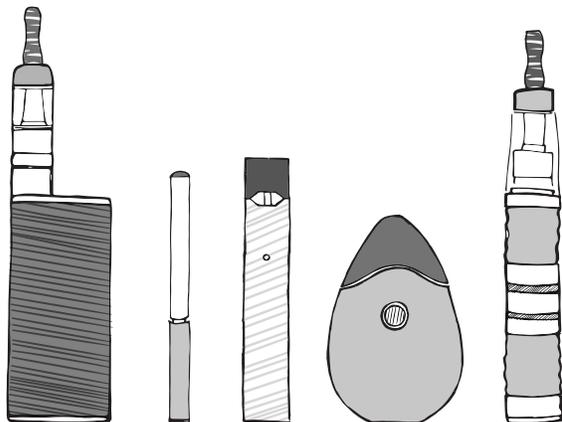
WHAT ARE THE RISKS FOR YOUTH?

- Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, which is highly addictive. Nicotine exposure during adolescence can:
 - » Harm brain development, which continues until about age 25.
 - » Impact learning, memory, and attention.
 - » Increase risk for future addiction to other drugs.
- Young people who use e-cigarettes may be more likely to go on to use regular cigarettes.
- Many e-cigarettes come in kid-friendly flavors – including mango, fruit, and crème – which make e-cigarettes more appealing to young people.
- E-cigarette aerosol is not harmless. It can contain harmful substances, including:
 - » Nicotine
 - » Cancer-causing chemicals
 - » Volatile organic compounds
 - » Ultrafine particles
 - » Flavorings that have been linked to lung disease
 - » Heavy metals such as nickel, tin, and lead



WHAT DO E-CIGARETTES LOOK LIKE?

- E-cigarettes come in many shapes and sizes. Some look like regular cigarettes, cigars, or pipes. Larger e-cigarettes such as tank systems – or “mods” – do not look like other tobacco products.
- Some e-cigarettes look like other items commonly used by youth, such as pens and other everyday items. New e-cigarettes shaped like USB flash drives are popular among youth, including JUUL and the PAX Era, which looks like JUUL and delivers marijuana.



WHAT CAN YOU DO AS AN EDUCATOR OR COACH?

As an educator or coach, you have an important role in protecting students from e-cigarettes.

- Engage your students in discussions about the dangers of e-cigarette use.
- Take advantage of free resources.
 - » CDC offers educators and coaches a free downloadable presentation about the risks of using e-cigarettes among youth at [CDC.gov/e-cigarettes](https://www.cdc.gov/e-cigarettes).
 - » FDA provides high school teachers with lesson plans and classroom activities at [scholastic.com/youthvapingrisks](https://www.scholastic.com/youthvapingrisks).
- Develop, implement, and enforce tobacco-free school policies and prevention programs that are free from tobacco industry influence, and that address all types of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes.
- Learn about the different shapes and types of e-cigarettes and the risks of e-cigarette use for young people at [CDC.gov/e-cigarettes](https://www.cdc.gov/e-cigarettes).

ABOUT USB FLASH DRIVE-SHAPED E-CIGARETTES

As an educator or coach, you may have heard about the use of USB flash drive-shaped e-cigarettes, including JUUL (pronounced “jewel”).

JUUL is the top-selling e-cigarette brand in the United States.

JUUL is being used by students in schools, including in classrooms and bathrooms. JUUL’s nicotine liquid refills are called “pods.” According to the manufacturer, a single JUUL pod can contain as much nicotine as a pack of 20 regular cigarettes.

JUUL delivers nicotine in a new form called “nicotine salts,” which can make it less harsh on the throat and easier to use by youth. JUUL also comes in flavors that can appeal to youth.

