

KNOW YOUR STUFF

VAPING

AKA: e-cigs, e-liquids, vape pens/sticks, puff bars & brand names



WHAT IS IT?

Vapes heat a liquid (sometimes called juice) that typically contains nicotine, flavourings and other chemicals, to create a vapour that is inhaled. Vapes come in lots of different shapes and sizes, and since June 2025 only reusable devices are legal in the UK.

THE HIGHS

Nicotine in vapes causes an adrenaline surge which can make someone feel more alert, and also activates the part of the brain involved in pleasure.

THE LOWS

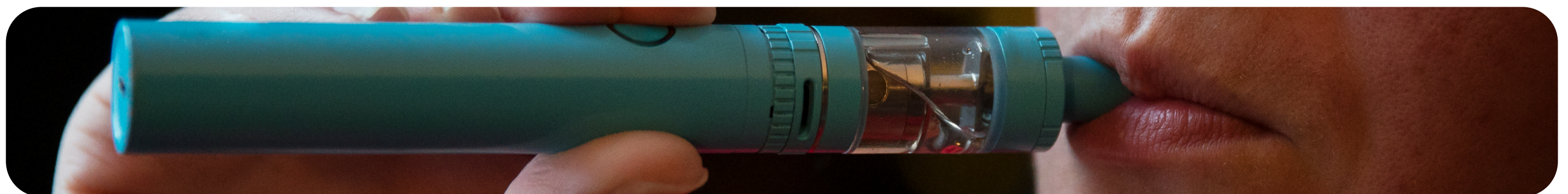
First time vapers are likely to feel dizzy, nauseous, and may feel like their heart is racing. It can also cause coughing, dry or irritated mouth and throat, headache, stomach ache, and feeling out of breath. Nicotine is a drug, so mixing with other drugs – including medicines – can cause other side effects.

Vaping is recommended as a way to help smokers quit, because it reduces exposure to toxic substances such as tar and carbon monoxide. But someone who vapes inhales around 2,000 chemicals, and they haven't all been identified, let alone their long-term effects established, but reported issues include problems with the lungs.

Because they are used as a quit aid, most vapes contain nicotine, which is highly addictive – and more so for younger people. It is easy to underestimate the amount of nicotine inhaled from a vape, because people tend to use them more often than they might smoke a cigarette. Giving up nicotine can be hard as the body has to readjust to being without it, meaning symptoms such as cravings, mood changes, anxiety and headaches may happen as a result of trying to withdraw from it.

The sale of vapes to anyone under 18 is illegal in the UK. Efforts are underway to strengthen enforcement of these rules and to introduce further restrictions on flavours and packaging - such as banning bright colours - through the Tobacco and Vapes Bill currently progressing through Parliament. Since June 2025, only reusable vaping devices are legal in the UK.

A growing issue is the number of vapes that contain drugs other than nicotine, with the most common being THC (the main drug in cannabis) and Spice (a synthetic form of cannabis). Both are potent drugs with many unpleasant effects, and someone who hasn't experienced them before, or uses one of these vapes without knowing what it contains, is at increased risk of issues – some young people have ended up in hospital. These products are also completely illegal, so won't have been through any checks at all in terms of their safety.



For more information go to:

FRANK

<https://www.talktofrank.com/drug/vapes>



DSM foundation
The drug education charity

www.dsmfoundation.org.uk

The Wellbeing Hub
— from Teen Tips —



www.teentips.co.uk