

e-cigarettes

Delivering Chemicals, Cannabis and Nicotine to Growing Number of Washington Youth

ISSUE

The popularity of e-cigarettes and other “vapor products” is on the rise, posing a threat to youth health, yet these products are not adequately regulated at a federal or state level. The American Public Health Association has recommended that states and municipalities enact laws prohibiting the use of e-cigarettes in enclosed public areas and places of employment due to their potential as a source of pollutants.¹ These devices produce an aerosol of exhaled nicotine, ultra-fine particles and other toxins rather than a harmless water vapor.²

WHAT WE KNOW

- **One in five high school seniors** in Washington reported e-cigarette use in 2014, up from one in fourteen in 2012.³ Nicotine is particularly harmful to brain development in children and a recent study found that teens who start using e-cigarettes are **8 times more likely to take up smoking**.⁴
- Recent studies have shown the increasing popularity among high school students of **using e-cigarettes to smoke cannabis**.⁵ Kids who use nicotine or marijuana at a young age are susceptible to addiction and continued use in adulthood.⁶ “As compared with persons who begin to use marijuana in adulthood, those who begin in adolescence are approximately 2 to 4 times as likely to have symptoms of cannabis dependence within 2 years after first use.”⁷
- E-liquid, the nicotine-containing component, **can poison children** via ingestion, inhalation, ocular exposure, and skin contact. In 2015, at least 61 e-cigarette poisonings have been reported, with **59 percent involving 1 to 3 year olds**.⁸ E-liquids are often sold without child resistant packaging and in **alluring candy-like flavors**, including caramel apple, wacky taffy and bubble gum.
- The FDA **does not currently regulate ingredients or safety claims** made by manufacturers. Some products that are labeled “nicotine-free” **actually contain small amounts of nicotine**.⁹ A Harvard study also recently discovered diacetyl, an **ingredient known to cause “popcorn lung”** (bronchiolitis obliterans), in 75 percent of the flavored e-liquids they tested.¹⁰
- In Washington, state law prohibits the sale of e-cigarettes to minors, but **doesn’t do anything else to regulate e-cigarettes** or the people who sell them (including online sellers). Grant, King, Pierce, Clark, and Snohomish Counties have passed ordinances regulating e-cigarettes. Other counties are considering similar ordinances.

American Cancer Society
Cancer Action Network

American Heart Association

American Lung Association
in Washington

Children’s Alliance

Foundation for Healthy
Generations

Mary Bridge Children’s
Hospital | Multicare Hospital
System

Public Health – Seattle
& King County

Public Health Roundtable

School Nurses of Washington

Tacoma-Pierce County
Health Department

Washington Chapter of the
American Academy of
Pediatrics

Washington Poison Center

Washington State Association
of Local Public Health Officials

Washington State Labor
Council

Washington State Medical
Association

Washington State Nurses
Association

Washington State Public
Health Association

¹ APHA (<https://www.apha.org/policies-and-advocacy/public-health-policy-statements/policy-database/2015/01/05/12/58/supporting-regulation-of-electronic-cigarettes>)

² PLOS ONE (<http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0057987>)

³ Washington State Department of Health (<http://www.doh.wa.gov/DataandStatisticalReports/DataSystems/HealthyYouthSurvey>)

⁴ JAMA (<http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=2436539>)

⁵ American Academy of Pediatrics (<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2015/09/01/peds.2015-1727.abstract?sid=406ba54c-3fa9-448a-9153-c5b88b7bb8d1>)

⁶ Surgeon General’s Report (<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/preventing-youth-tobacco-use/factsheet.html>)

⁷ The New England Journal of Medicine (<http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMr1402309>)

⁸ Washington State Poison Center (<http://www.wapc.org/wp-content/uploads/WAPC-Toxic-Trends-E-Cigs-November-2015.pdf>)

⁹ FDA (<http://www.fda.gov/downloads/drugs/scienceresearch/ucm173250.pdf>)

¹⁰ Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health (<http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/15-10185/>)