

# Parents Beware – The Dangers of Teens Who Vape

by [Raychelle C. Lohmann](#) on September 30, 2016 in [Health and Wellness](#)

Since their introduction in the early 2000's, e-cigarettes and vaporizers have continued to grow in popularity with youth. For the second year in a row, e-cigarettes were rated the most popular product among teens. The Federal Drug Administration's latest statistics indicate more than 3 million middle and high school students were users of e-cigarettes in 2015; approximately 540,000 more consumers than in 2014. Additionally, one in four high school students reported vaping in 2015, compared to one in five in 2011. Why are these devices so appealing to youth? Is it because they think vaping is safer than smoking? Is it the luring appeal of the unique flavors? Perhaps, their curiosity is peaked by the sheer novelty of the device...

Although, e-cigarettes have been around for more than a decade, they are a relatively new phenomenon among teens. As the popularity of these devices increases, there is a need for more information about the use of these products. Researchers are beginning to conduct studies on vaping and the findings are concerning:

A study out of the University of Southern California followed two groups of 300 high school juniors and seniors over a period of 16 months. One group of teens smoked e-cigarettes and the other one did not. They discovered approximately 40% of teens who used vapor cigarettes started [smoking tobacco cigarettes](#), compared to 10% of the youth who did not use e-cigarettes. So, it appears these devices can lead to an unhealthy smoking habit, as well as getting hooked on nicotine.

## Another Gateway Drug?

While vaping is a way for teens to get a nicotine fix, it's also opening the door for them to experiment with other illicit drugs. In a study published in the medical journal *Pediatrics*, researchers uncovered teens have cleverly found ways to use e-cigarettes to consume hashish oil, [marijuana](#), wax and other cannabis products. In this study,



approximately 3,800 high school students were asked about their drug and e-cigarette use and findings revealed youth used e-cigarettes to vaporize cannabis at a rate that was 27 times higher than the adult rate!

While studies are still forthcoming on the dangers associated with vaping, below is some important information that every parent needs to know about the vaping craze:

- **E-cigarettes and pen vaporizers are easy for underage users to buy and they aren't expensive.** In fact, the cost of smoking an e-cigarette is more cost efficient than smoking a pack of cigarettes. According to *Time* magazine, a pack-a-day smoker can save around \$1,200 per year by vaping. So, for a teen who is already strapped for cash, vaping is an appealing alternative to traditional smoking.
- **Fortunately, the FDA has a new regulation (2016) banning minors from purchasing e-cigarettes in person or online.** So, they are not as accessible as they were in the past.
- **The vaporizer cartridges come in a variety of tempting flavors (i.e., tropical fruit, mint, butter pecan, Bavarian cream and coffee).** Sadly, with such child-like flavors, these devices are highly appealing to young populations. No matter how innocent these flavors sound, research on some e-cigarette products found the vapor to contain known carcinogens and toxic chemicals, as well as potentially toxic metal nanoparticles from the vaporizing mechanism. A study from Harvard University uncovered the presence of dangerous, lung-destroying chemicals (i.e., diacetyl, 2, 3-pentanedione, and acetoin in a sample of 51 products) in electronic cigarettes and other vaping devices.  
(<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/electronic-cigarettes-e-cigarettes#youth>)
- **E-cigarettes are easy to hide.** The battery operated devices come in a variety of shapes, and sizes. Some resemble a ball point pen or USB drive, so they are easy to slip past parents and school officials.
- **E-cigarettes contain odorless substances.** Puffing an e-cigarette or vaporizer doesn't give off the stench of tobacco or pot. So, parents, school officials, and law enforcement can't rely on their noses to detect what is being vaped.

From increasing the chances of smoking cigarettes, to getting high, the findings are concluding – electronic smoking devices are not safe for teens. While many adults use these devices as a means to break the habit, these devices are introducing many youths to the habit.