

## YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

Smokefree SC believes all tobacco products pose severe health risks to individuals and communities, including electronic cigarettes, also known as e-cigs, vapes, tanks, mods, etc. Since 2014, e-cigarettes have been the most used product among youth. Smokefree SC recognizes the alarming, increased use of e-cigarettes among youth and young adults under the age of 21.

According to the 2021 South Carolina Youth Tobacco Survey, 21% of SC high school students reported using e-cigarettes within the past 30 days: 50% higher than the 2021 national average (21% versus 14%). **Based on conversations with and visits to schools, administrators, and teachers throughout the state, we believe this percentage may increase in the 2023 survey.**

Nicotine is in all tobacco products. It is what makes tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, highly addictive. Nicotine use is harmful to teenage brain development and greatly impairs learning, attention, impulse control, and mood regulation, all of which are naturally changing and adapting during adolescence. The nicotine used in some e-cigarette devices is among the most addictive forms: liquid nicotine salts. This form of nicotine is easier to inhale and feels less harsh for new users leading to more frequent use and addiction ([Stanford Tobacco Toolkit](#)).

Nicotine is not the only harmful component in the e-cigarette aerosol that users inhale. Many contain cancer causing chemicals, dangerous flavoring ingredients, such as menthol and diacetyl, and ultra-fine particles that can travel deep into the lungs and cause permanent damage. All of these components can impact heart and lung health ([Surgeon General's Advisory](#)).

E-cigarettes are relatively new to the tobacco market, only appearing in 2007. There is still much to be researched about the long-term health risks of this tobacco product. Smokefree SC is committed to following the emerging science in this area to protect the health of future generations.

### Smokefree SC supports reducing youth access to these harmful devices through:

- Banning flavored tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, at a statewide level
- Developing an effective Tobacco Retail Licensing program instead of the current registration program in Act 38 (description or link to TRL website section)
- Reducing tobacco and e-cigarette marketing that appeals to youth through community engagement and educating decision makers
- Encouraging and supporting parents, teachers, school administrators, religious leaders, community leaders, and others to promote conversations with their youth and young adults regarding the dangers of vaping through Vape Talks

Smokefree SC believes neither youth nor young adults should begin using any tobacco product, including e-cigarettes. There are no health benefits to starting using tobacco products, only risks. If you are currently using any of these products, access [one of the many resources](#) to help you quit.

## **ADULT**

Smokefree SC believes all tobacco products pose severe health risks to individuals and communities, including electronic cigarettes, also known as e-cigs, vapes, tanks, mods, etc. The safest and healthiest approach is to not use any type of tobacco product.

Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States. Cigarette smoking causes more than 480,000 deaths each year in the United States, nearly one in five deaths ([CDC](#)).

E-cigarettes were introduced with clever and deceptive marketing. Many people believe they are a “safer alternative” to cigarettes, but, while there are fewer carcinogens and contaminants in the vape aerosol, safer does not equal safe. In addition to nicotine which increases blood pressure and heart rate as well as constricts arteries increasing the likelihood of heart disease, e-cigarette aerosol includes potentially harmful substances such as diacetyl (a chemical linked to a serious lung disease), cancer-causing chemicals, volatile organic compounds, and heavy metals such as nickel, tin, and lead. Users breathe in these toxic contaminants, and non-users nearby risk secondhand exposure ([American Heart Association](#)).

While e-cigarettes may help some people quit smoking cigarettes, scientists still have a lot to learn about their effectiveness as a quitting tool and if the long-term risks outweigh the possible quitting benefit ([National Institute of Health](#)). Currently, no e-cigarette has been approved by the FDA as a smoking cessation device. The FDA has approved seven products for quitting smoking, and we recommend talking to your doctor or calling 1-800-QUITNOW to learn more.

If you've never smoked or used other tobacco products or e-cigarettes, don't start. There are no health benefits to starting to use a tobacco product, including e-cigarettes.