

Special Update: Vaping

Learn about Vaping and its dangers....

Dear Parents and Students

As we enter the second quarter of the school year, we wanted to take some time to address a growing concerning trend amongst our students.

Long gone are the days where we might walk down the hall, following a scent trail wreaking of tobacco, leading into the bathroom where a student can be found smoking a cigarette.

Today, we are much more likely to encounter weak hints of strawberries, oranges, and bubblegum as students leave their class for a "bathroom break" and take a quick hit from their "vape."

The consequences for both are the same: a school suspension. But students are often surprised because, as they say, "vaping isn't harmful." Parents often wonder about this rule too. In the "old days" if we confiscated cigarettes from kids, parents would ensure they were thrown out. These days, parents are often picking up the vapes/E-cigarettes that we confiscated and turning them back over to their children, because they've been told that it's "just water vapor" or simply "smells like watermelon."

But is vaping safe? We know it isn't and wanted to share some important resources with you. With these new technologies, it's hard to keep up so we wanted to do our best to help.

- Jon Krol
Wachusett Regional High School
Holden, MA

What is a vape? There are three major components..



Vapes

Vaping devices can look very different from one another. Some look like fake

Batteries

Vapes typically take rechargeable batteries, some even

eJuice

There is a plethora of juices that people vape. They can contain elements of

cigarettes, others look more like USB flashdrives, and others are large and elaborate. Some people even take the time to make and "mod" their own.

marijuana, smell fruity, or contain nicotine (which most do).

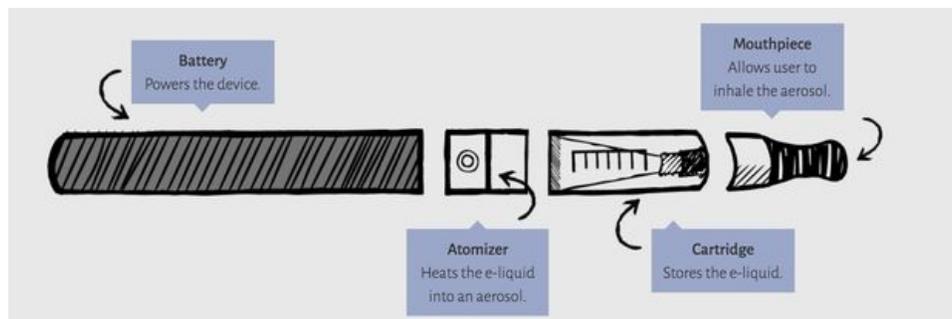
This is a box of vapes and paraphernalia that was confiscated from students in a short time period. The box contains batteries, vape devices (bottom left and top right), and vape oils.



How an E-cigarette works

E-cigarettes create an aerosol by using a battery to heat up liquid that usually contains nicotine, flavorings, and other additives. Users inhale this aerosol into their lungs. E-cigarettes can also be used to deliver cannabinoids such as marijuana and other drugs.

[Source](#)



Some Common Vaping Myths

Myth #1 Vapes/E-Cigarettes are Safe

- Fact: E-cigarettes are unregulated tobacco products: "We don't know for sure what's in them. Studies have found toxic chemicals including an ingredient used in antifreeze and formaldehyde in e-cigarettes. Because the FDA doesn't regulate these products, there aren't requirements around ingredient disclosure, warning labels, or youth access restrictions."

Myth #2 E-cigarettes don't have nicotine

- Fact: Almost all e-cigarettes contain nicotine, including many that claim they are nicotine-free. "A 2014 study showed wide-ranging nicotine levels in e-cigarettes and inconsistencies between listed and actual

nicotine levels in these products. Nicotine is an addictive substance that can have negative health impacts, including on adolescent brain development. The more nicotine a person uses, the greater the potential for addiction."

Myth #3 E-cigarettes can help smokers quit

- Fact: The FDA hasn't found any e-cigarette to be safe and effective in helping smokers quit. "Instead of quitting, many e-cigarette users are continuing to use e-cigarettes while still using conventional cigarettes."

Myth #4 E-cigarettes aren't marketed to kids

- E-cigarette use among middle and high school students more than tripled from 2013 to 2015. "With aggressive industry tactics such as cartoon characters and candy flavors including bubble gum, fruit loops, chocolate and strawberry, it's no surprise studies show a dramatic increase in kids using e-cigarettes. For the first time ever, teens are smoking e-cigarettes more than traditional cigarettes."

[Source](#)

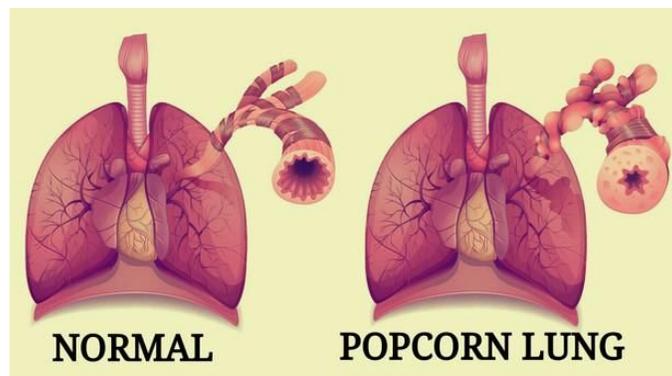
Vaping and its Impact on our Bodies

Vaping has been linked to chronic bronchitis (aka smoker's cough), bloody sores, lung wounds that won't heal, and even cancer. Check out this [article](#) for more information.

Popcorn Lung

The picture below demonstrates a potential risk of vaping - popcorn lung. Popcorn lung is a serious lung disease linked to a chemical that is used in some vaping liquids.

More information about it can be found [here](#).



Addiction

How does the nicotine in e-cigarettes affect the brain? Until about age 25, the brain is still growing. Each time a new memory is created or a new skill is learned, stronger connections – or synapses – are built between brain cells. Young people's brains build synapses faster than adult brains. Because addiction is a form of learning, adolescents can get addicted more easily than adults. The nicotine in e-cigarettes and other tobacco products can also prime the adolescent brain for addiction to other drugs.

[Source](#)

Links, Resources, and Articles

[A very comprehensive website put together by the Surgeon General on E-cigarettes](#)

[American Lung Association's stance on E-cigarettes](#)

[An article on a new vaping tool](#)

[An article about an exploding vape on a Massachusetts school bus](#)