

What is Vaping?

Vapor products, also known as e-cigarettes or vape pens, represent a market that has grown exponentially since they were first introduced in the mid-2000s. They are typically equipped with a battery, a heating device and a cartridge containing nicotine, flavorings, and solvents. The nicotine solution is heated to produce an aerosol that is inhaled or vaped. There are more than 400 different brands of e-cigarettes and more than 7,000 flavoring chemicals.

What are the public health concerns with vaping?

Use of vapor products is largely unregulated and rapidly increasing, especially among youth. In addition to the nicotine, vaping may expose users and by-standers to harmful toxins like formaldehyde and heavy metals. It may take decades to fully understand long-term effects of e-cigarettes and exposure to vaporized nicotine.

Public health concerns with vapor products delivering nicotine mixtures along with other drugs include:

- Potential health effects from vaping or exposure to an aerosol containing unknown mixtures of potentially harmful chemicals especially for vulnerable populations such as children, pregnant women, and individuals with compromised lungs.
- Potential increased addiction to nicotine (potentially leading to increased smoking) associated with rapidly increasing use of e-cigarettes and vapor devices by teens and young adults.
- Potential increased addiction to other drugs as a result of vaping other drugs including marijuana, heroin, and other opioids.
- High poisoning risk to young children from exposure to concentrated liquid nicotine or other drugs.

What has the state done to address the issue of e-cigarettes?

Washington State passed a bill in the spring of 2016 to better regulate vapor products. The main points of the bill are:

- No one under the age of 18 may buy or possess any vapor product
- Liquid nicotine containers must be placed in child-proof packaging
- Nicotine products must be clearly labeled
- The Washington Liquor and Cannabis Board will be issuing licenses for vendors wishing to sell vapor products
- Vapor devices are not permitted indoors in schools, on elevators, on school buses, or other childcare facilities. Local Jurisdictions may place further regulations

What is the Health District doing to address the issues of e-cigarettes?

The Health District adopted a local ordinance that was approved by the Snohomish County Board of Health in November 2015. The ordinance is designed to protect the public's health by prohibiting the use of vapor products in public places and places of employment. Additionally, the health district is engaged in the following programmatic activities:

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- Educate youth and parents on the dangers of vapor devices
 - Encourage all secondary campus in Snohomish County to adopt a no smoking/no vaping policy
 - Reach out to the public through targeted media campaigns
 - Work with cities to create no smoking/no vaping parks
 - Work with apartment complexes to improve their no smoking/ no vaping policies

Why are you banning vaping?

The Health District is not “banning” the use of vapor products. We have created a policy to help protect the residents of Snohomish County from the potential risks of second-hand exposure to these products in public spaces and help reduce youth use of these addictive nicotine products.

Where can I review the approved ordinance?

The ordinance and summary can be found on our Vaping & Vapor Products page.

Aren't e-cigarettes and other vapor products regulated by the FDA?

Until 2016, e-cigarettes and other vapor products had no regulation from the federal government. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently released a “deeming rule” which would allow it to regulate e-cigarettes and vapor devices under the Tobacco Control Act.

I've used vapor products to help me quit smoking. Why would you want to prevent people from quitting?

The Health District fully supports any person desiring to quit smoking and we understand it's not an easy feat. While vaping may be safer than smoking tobacco that does not mean vapor products are safe. Furthermore, several studies have documented that using vapor products does not actually help people quit. The Health District recommends that people who smoke use more traditional and tested quitting methods; such as quitlines, nicotine, counseling sessions, and other quit aids; and not vapor devices to stop smoking.