

# TOBACCO IS CHANGING FAQ

## 1. How old do you have to be purchase tobacco products?

In Utah, you must be 19 years old to purchase any tobacco product. But even if your child isn't 19 yet, it's still important to talk to them about tobacco. All too often, they are exposed to these products before they're old enough to buy them on their own.

## 2. Are e-cigarettes considered tobacco products?

You might have guessed, but the answer is yes. E-cigarettes are considered a tobacco product by the FDA and are subject to careful regulation. They might look and work differently than traditional cigarettes, but they are still highly effective at delivering addictive nicotine to users.

## 3. What are the effects on the brain?

When you use tobacco, it can cause immediate and long-term effects, including mood disorders, lower impulse control, and difficulty focusing. Simply put, nicotine alters brain chemistry. And since the brain develops until the age of 25, young people are particularly at risk for long-term damage to areas of the brain that control personality, behavior and decision making. Not only can nicotine affect how the brain develops, the nicotine in every tobacco product is equally addictive. Don't let nicotine put a teen's future at risk.

## 4. How do I start the conversation?

Before you talk to your teen learn more about the potential risks from e-cigarettes and other tobacco products. Find the right moment to start an open conversation and be ready to listen and ask questions. Remember, "the talk" doesn't have to be a one-time thing. It can be an ongoing conversation that happens when you see someone using one of these products. You can always ask for support from healthcare providers, teachers, faith leaders or coaches. We're all in this together.

## 5. What if there is zero nicotine in the vape?

It's difficult to know what e-cigarette products contain. Part of the problem is that there are currently no enforceable, universal product standards that e-cigarette manufactures must adhere to. This means there is just no way to know what's in the liquids being used or if they're actually safe. Even products that market themselves as containing zero nicotine have been found to contain nicotine.

## 6. Is e-cig vapor just water?

Despite what you may have heard, the vapor from e-cigarettes is not just water. In fact, the vapor, or aerosol, is full of harmful substances like nicotine, heavy metals, and cancer causing chemicals. Additionally, the aerosol contains ultrafine particles and volatile organic compounds. So, it's definitely not just harmless water vapor — the aerosol can actually be harmful to others when they are exposed to secondhand vape.

## 7. How does a vape work?

If you've ever wondered just how an e-cigarette works, you're not alone. It's actually pretty simple. A battery creates an electric current that passes through a metal coil to heat nicotine-containing e-liquids which produces an aerosol, commonly called vapor, that the user inhales into their lungs. The liquid used in vapes is called e-liquid or e-juice, and it comes in pre-filled pods or bottles. They usually contain flavorings which is one reason they have become so popular with the youth.

## 8. My teen uses tobacco, what now?

No matter the age, it's hard to quit tobacco. Nicotine is highly addictive. If your teenager is using tobacco, there's a way to help them quit. Talk with them. Try explaining why you want them to quit. Ask them about their concerns. Explain the immediate negative results of using tobacco, like insomnia, decreased energy, and cost. Together, you can help make a quit plan by setting a quit date and figuring out how to deal with cravings. Quitting tobacco isn't easy, but if your teen has support, they can do it.

## 9. Are there programs to help my teen who uses tobacco?

If your teen uses tobacco, help is available. Check out [teen.smokefree.gov](http://teen.smokefree.gov) for tools and tips specifically designed to help teenagers to quit using tobacco products. You can also reach out to your local health department who can connect you with free services including the Utah Teen Quit Line. These are fantastic local options that can help Utah teens quit tobacco and plan for a healthy future.

## 10. What if tobacco products are used as part of cultural or religious ceremonies? How do I explain when it is okay and not okay?

Some cultures, such as American Indians and Alaska natives, use traditional tobacco for ceremonial and medicinal purposes. They use the tobacco in a prescribed way to promote physical, spiritual, emotional, and community well-being. Rather than being used for recreation, they approach tobacco with care and treat it as something sacred.

To learn more about these plants and their proper uses, please contact the Urban Indian Center of SLC or your local tribal representative to learn more about the sacred and proper uses of non-commercial tobacco.

## 11. Why don't we know more about e-cigarettes?

When it comes to e-cigarettes and vapes, they are still relatively new. They have only been on the market for about 11 years, which is only a fraction of the time of traditional cigarettes. There is still a lot of research that needs to be done, which is one of many reasons to be cautious about their use. In the meantime, do your research — there are plenty of great resources available online.