

## Dangers of vaping

When vaping was introduced in 2004, it was marketed as a “safe” alternative to smoking or a step used by smokers to transition to nonsmokers. It wasn’t until 2008 that agencies such as the World Health Organization and later the U.S. Food and Drug Administration began seriously challenging such marketing claims. Today the FDA’s official stance is that e-cigarettes aren’t an approved smoking cessation tool and can pose health dangers just as serious as cigarettes. According to nationwide surveys in 2018, about 3.6 million teens and 10.8 million adults vape.

Because e-cigarettes don’t have tobacco, and “vapor” sounds like water, it can be easy to forget that the components found in the e-liquid aren’t healthy for your body. These include:

- Nicotine that makes them addictive
- Chemicals that can put you at risk for lung, liver or heart disease
- Flavor chemicals that aren’t regulated and can include ingredients such as acrylonitrile, a known carcinogen

Millions of middle and high school students vape. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that when you speak to your children you:

- Discuss the facts.
- Talk often.
- Ask why they want to vape.
- Set expectations.



A study led by researchers from Stanford University School of Medicine published in August 2020 in the *Journal of Adolescent Health* studied the connections between teen vaping and COVID-19.

- Teens who vaped were five to seven times more likely to be infected with COVID-19 than those who didn’t use e-cigarettes.
- The study’s senior author said it’s important for teens and young adults to know that if they use e-cigarettes, they’re potentially at higher risk for COVID-19-related symptoms, a positive diagnosis and worse health outcomes because they’re damaging their lungs.

If you or a loved one needs help quitting tobacco, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan can help. Our Tobacco Coaching program, powered by WebMD<sup>®</sup>, is available to all adult Blue Cross and Blue Care Network members. It includes help for all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and vaping products. Call 1-855-326-5102 to find out if you’re eligible to schedule your first call.

Sources: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)\*, [truthinitiative.org](https://www.truthinitiative.org)\*, [cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org)\*, [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)\*

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