

E-Cigs 2.0: The Next Generation

In the decade-plus since their U.S. introduction, electronic cigarettes, known as e-cigarettes or vapes, drastically evolved. E-cigarettes first resembled conventional cigarettes, and now have morphed into sleek gadgets, like the JUUL, pictured at left, that have become the next big thing. Youth love them for the big hit of nicotine and their easily-hidden, deceptive looks. Their resemblance to USB flash drives prompted some schools to ban the drives as teachers can't tell the difference between the two. Terms like "JUULing or jewelng" and "vaping" entered the teen vernacular. Users have coined dedicated hash tags on social media and created videos of themselves doing vape tricks or blatantly vaping at school. Their prevalence prompted the U.S. Surgeon General to refer to youth e-cigarette use as an "epidemic" in 2018 and resulted in advisories from the Centers for Disease Control.^{1,2}

So, what's an e-cigarette?

E-cigarettes are battery-operated devices that contain a mixture of liquid nicotine and other chemicals. The device heats this mixture, called e-juice, producing a nicotine aerosol that is inhaled. E-cigarettes are also called e-hookahs, e-pipes, vape pens, hookah pens or personal vaporizers.

FACT:

Nicotine is harmful to developing brains.

Nicotine interferes with brain development and can have a long-term effect on mental health. Even brief or intermittent nicotine exposure during adolescence can cause lasting damage.³ E-cigarette use by youth and young adults increases their risk of using conventional cigarettes in the future.⁴

FACT:

E-cigarette use remains high among MN youth.

The youth tobacco usage rate increased for the first time in 2017 because of the increase in the use of e-cigarettes and has remained high. One in five youth (19.3 percent) currently use e-cigarettes, according to the 2020 Minnesota Youth Tobacco Survey. That is a 49 percent increase since 2014's survey.⁵

FACT:

E-cigarettes are not approved as a cessation tool.

E-cigarettes have not been proven to be better for quitting than existing programs.² For adults wanting to quit, there are FDA-approved quit aids such as gum, patches and lozenges, available at www.QuitPartnerMN.com. Teens can go to www.MyLifeMyQuit.com for free quit help.



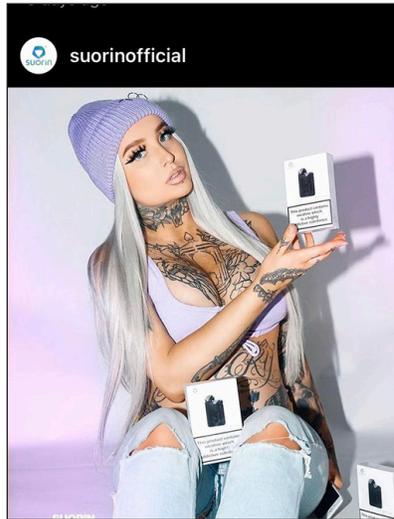
Disposable e-cigarettes, such as the Puff bar above, have become popular among teens because of the many flavors, low price and ease of use.

The evolution of e-cigarettes



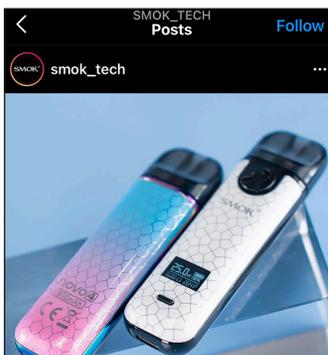
Early e-cigarettes resembled conventional cigarettes and were called "cig-a-likes." They evolved into pen-shaped devices with small tanks that held e-juice. Tanks got bigger, morphing into the mods that give users more control of the device. Youth usage soared in 2015 with the emergence of JUUL, which resembled a USB device and packed a powerful nicotine punch. Since its release, other companies mimicked their style and also put out high-nicotine devices that looked like JUULs. Pod mods and disposables have become the latest go-to devices for teens as the FDA started regulating JUUL-like devices.

FACT: E-cigarettes are marketed to youth.



Vaping companies such as Suorin and Smok, heavily target youth on social media, particularly Instagram and SnapChat. They use popular hashtags like #puffbar and #JUULtricks and also pay popular influencers. In Minnesota, 68 percent of students had seen ads promoting e-cigarettes in the past 30 days.⁵ E-cigarettes come in a variety of youth-friendly flavors, such as menthol, watermelon, blue raspberry, cherry limeade, churros and funnel cake.⁶

(Images retrieved from Instagram.)



FACT:

E-cigarettes are not harm-free.

E-cigarettes contribute to indoor air pollution. Studies have found nicotine, heavy metals, toxins, and carcinogens in e-cigarette aerosol.⁴

SOURCES

- 1 US Surgeon General (2018). Surgeon General's Advisory on E-cigarette Use Among Youth. Atlanta, GA: Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- 2 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2018). Sales of JUUL e-cigarettes skyrocket, posing danger to youth. Atlanta, GA: Office on Smoking or Health.
- 3 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Smoking: 50 Years of Progress. A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, January 2014.
- 4 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2018 Public Health Consequences of E-Cigarettes. The National Academies Press. 2018
- 5 Evered SR. Teens and Tobacco in Minnesota: Highlights from the 2020 Minnesota Youth Tobacco Survey: Minnesota Center for Health Statistics, Minnesota Department of Health, February 2021.
- 6 US Surgeon General (2012). Preventing Tobacco Use among Youth and Young Adults. Atlanta, GA: Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Association for Nonsmokers-Minnesota is dedicated to reducing the human and economic costs of tobacco use in Minnesota. (March 2021)



2395 University Avenue W, Suite 310, St. Paul, MN 55114
651-646-3005 | www.ansrmn.org