

E-cigarettes

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1 E-cigarette use is increasing in Canada, especially among youth

The ever use of battery-powered electronic nicotine delivery systems or e-cigarettes by Canadians aged 16–17 years increased from 29.3% in 2017 to 37% in 2018 (and reported use on at least 15 of every 30 days increased from 2.1% to 3.6%). Moreover, the prevalence and frequency of vaping increased among never and experimental smokers in parallel with the rise of use of JUUL (an e-cigarette with high nicotine concentration).¹

2 E-cigarette use is strongly associated with the initiation and ongoing use of cigarette smoking

Current evidence indicates that among those aged 14–30 years, non-smokers who use e-cigarettes have a greater than 3-fold increase (23.2% v. 7.2%) in the initiation and use of cigarette smoking.² This difference suggests that for every 6 nonsmokers using e-cigarettes, 1 of them will begin smoking cigarettes.

3 E-cigarettes are an additional smoking cessation tool

A recent randomized clinical trial provides evidence supporting e-cigarettes as an effective smoking cessation tool.³

4 E-cigarettes are unregulated products with potentially dangerous health effects

Long-term, direct health risks caused by using e-cigarettes are expected to take many years to become apparent. However, nicotine is highly addictive. Moreover, of great concern, recent findings have suggested that e-cigarette exposure may result in serious pulmonary effects.⁴

5 Clinicians should ask about e-cigarette use

Because of the evidence regarding the effect of e-cigarette use on the initiation of smoking, consistent with Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care recommendations,⁵ physicians should, as appropriate, consider counselling nonsmokers on this and other health risks of e-cigarettes during primary care visits. In addition, for those who have successfully used e-cigarettes as a smoking cessation aid, clinicians should support the cessation of e-cigarette use, considering the current epidemic of vaping-related pulmonary illnesses.⁴

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