

When You're Concerned About Vaping

Understanding vaping and how to respond with support



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Discovering that your child may be vaping can bring up a lot of emotions. You may feel worried, disappointed, or unsure what to do next.

Vaping is common among adolescents and teens, and many vaping products contain nicotine, which can make them difficult to stop using once someone starts. Many vaping products are also designed to be discreet, making it common for parents to feel unsure about what they're seeing or how concerned they should be.

While it's important to take vaping seriously, it's also important not to panic.

How you respond can have a big impact on whether your child feels comfortable talking openly about what's going on and accepting support.

What you might be noticing

- You found a vape or vaping device
- Your child told you they tried vaping
- You heard concerns from school, friends, or other parents
- Your child becomes defensive when vaping is discussed
- You're worried they may be vaping regularly

What it might mean

Young people vape for many different reasons. Some are curious. Some are influenced by friends or social situations. Some use vaping to cope with stress, anxiety, or difficult emotions.

Over time, some young people may also develop nicotine dependence. In other cases, vaping

may be connected to broader emotional or mental health challenges.

Understanding what role vaping is playing in your child's life can help guide you toward the most helpful response.

What helps at home



Start with calm

Your first response matters—a lot. While it's natural to feel worried, frustrated, or angry, taking a moment to pause can help set the tone for a more productive conversation. Staying calm can make it more likely that your child will talk openly about what's happening.



Get curious before jumping to conclusions

Try asking:

- “Can you help me understand what's been going on?”
- “What do you like about it?”
- “When did it start?”

The goal is to understand, not immediately solve. A calm, curious conversation is often more effective than a series of rapid-fire questions.



Focus on connection before consequences

Your child is more likely to accept guidance when they feel heard and understood.

This doesn't mean ignoring rules or expectations. And it doesn't mean you have to like or agree with what your child is sharing. It means starting with conversation and connection first.



Learn what role vaping is playing

For some young people, vaping is about curiosity. For others, it may be helping them manage stress, anxiety, social pressure, or difficult emotions.

Understanding what vaping is doing for your child can help you identify healthier ways to meet that same need. In other words, addressing the underlying reason is often as important as addressing the vaping itself.



Work together on next steps

Once you've had a chance to listen and understand what's going on, share your concerns calmly and clearly. Talk about what support might be helpful.

This may include:

- reducing access
- identifying triggers
- building alternative coping strategies
- seeking additional support if needed

The goal is not just to stop the behavior, but to help your child make healthier choices moving forward.



Partner with others when appropriate

Families often have the most success when they don't have to navigate these concerns alone. If vaping is affecting your child at school, consider partnering with school staff. Your child's pediatrician can also be an important source of support, guidance, and resources.

Try This Tonight

- Take a breath before starting the conversation
- Ask one open-ended question
- Focus on understanding before problem-solving

FAQs

"Should my child be punished?"

Consequences may be appropriate in some situations, but conversation, support, and understanding are often more effective than punishment alone.

If your child is worried about getting in trouble, they may be less likely to talk openly about what's happening or ask for help. The goal is to address the behavior while keeping communication open.

"Is vaping addictive?"

Many vapes contain nicotine, which can lead to dependence. The earlier someone starts using nicotine, the harder it can sometimes be to stop, which is one reason why early conversations and support are so important.

When to seek extra support

- Your child is vaping regularly
- They are having difficulty stopping
- Vaping seems connected to stress, anxiety, or emotional concerns
- Your child is struggling with mood, anxiety, or coping in other areas of life
- You feel stuck or unsure how to help

Support from your child's healthcare provider, school, or mental health professional can help you better understand what is happening and identify next steps.



Looking for more support?

Explore our companion guide, [**Talking with Your Child About Vaping**](#), for tips on having early conversations about vaping, nicotine, and peer pressure.