

# TIPS FOR TALKING WITH TEENS

## LISTEN

Whether or not your kids have tried vaping, they'll benefit from a good talk. And a good talk starts with listening. Let the kids tell you what it's like to be surrounded by teens who vape. These starter questions are a simple way in:

**Do you have friends who vape?**

**Are you curious about it?**

**Have you been offered a vape?**

**Have you tried it?**

**If so, what made you say yes?**

**If not, what made you say no?**

As kids move through middle and high school, they'll face new challenges. Support them every step of the way by keeping the conversation going. Did you ever feel pressured to smoke? You could talk about your experience, including how hard it was for you to quit. An open dialogue is far more effective than one big lecture.

## BLAME FLAVORS

How has vaping grown so fast? Blame flavors. 96% of high school kids in CA who vape use flavors. Most say flavors are why they use vapes. No surprise, since fun flavors trick kids into thinking vaping is harmless. Yet the chemicals the tobacco industry uses to create those flavors may damage your lungs, too. Some flavors may increase the likelihood of addiction by messing with dopamine, the brain's "feel-good" chemical. Help kids understand that by hooking them on flavors, including menthol, the tobacco industry profits.

## TALK SCIENCE

The main things kids (and adults) know about nicotine is that it's addictive. But addiction is only the beginning. Teens should understand that nicotine is brain poison. It changes the way connections form in the brain, making it harder for kids to learn and pay attention. As if teen years weren't hard enough, nicotine can also increase anxiety, mood swings, and irritability. Getting hooked on nicotine puts kids at risk for addiction to other substances, too.

## LEARN MORE

Visit [PAVe](#) (Parents Against Vaping e-cigs) for a fact-filled toolkit and links to helpful websites and videos.

Use Stanford's [anti-vaping toolkit](#) to get downloadable presentations, worksheets, and activity guides.

Get the California Department of Education's [e-cigarette toolkit](#).

Learn from the American Heart Association partnership about the tobacco industry's [insidious role in hooking kids](#).

Get tips from the U.S. Surgeon General on [how to talk to your kids](#) about vaping.

# BE PREPARED FOR EXCUSES

Kids are getting a ton of misinformation about vaping online. Here's how parents can respond to some common excuses.

## KID:

It's not mine.

## ADULT:

I hope it's not yours, but I get that you might be tempted to try vaping. I'm worried because vaping can be addictive and can change the way your brain works. Plus, I know the tobacco industry makes vapes that look like flash drives so they're easy to hide. It's not that I don't trust you, but you should know that I'm paying attention.

## KID:

Vaping is safer than smoking.

## ADULT:

There's actually nothing safe about vaping. It's not water vapor like some people think. The vapor is actually aerosol that contains metals, particulates, and toxic chemicals. And many vapes use nicotine salts rather than regular nicotine. Salts are inhaled more easily and absorbed faster than regular nicotine.

## KID:

Nicotine's just a little buzz.

## ADULT:

Nicotine does release a chemical called dopamine in the brain, which might make you feel good temporarily. But don't be tricked. Nicotine is a neurotoxin, which means it's a poison that affects the brain. When you're young and your brain is still developing, nicotine can do lasting, even permanent, damage.

## KID:

It's not nicotine. It's just water and flavors.

## ADULT:

It's not obvious to kids, or even grownups, that something that tastes minty, fruity, or sweet is actually an addictive drug that can have long-term effects on a kid's developing brain. The chemicals the tobacco industry uses to create those flavors may damage your lungs, too.