The Dangers of E-cigarettes

Electronic cigarettes, otherwise known as, “E-cigarettes,” or “E-cigs,” are battery-powered devices that are made to look and feel much like regular cigarettes. A liquid containing nicotine, flavoring, and other chemicals held in a cartridge is converted into vapor by a heating device in the e-cigarette. The vapor is inhaled by the user. For this reason, using electronic cigarettes is also called “vaping.” A recent study found that e-cigarette use by middle and high school students more than tripled between 2011 and 2013.1

Electronic cigarettes are often marketed as a safe alternative to smoking or as a means to quit smoking, but in reality they are not. Electronic cigarettes are just another way of putting the highly addictive and harmful drug, nicotine, into the body. Nicotine causes harmful effects on the body’s brain, nervous system and heart. It raises blood pressure and heart rate, could lead to an abnormal heart rate and, in extreme cases, heart failure and death. Long-term health consequences of nicotine use include serious medical issues such as heart disease, blood clots and stomach ulcers. Reports have also indicated nicotine has adverse effects on youth brain development that could result in lasting deficits in learning.

Nicotine is very addictive. Once the initial effects wear off, the body begins to crave more. Effects of nicotine withdrawal include feelings of depression, irritability, and tiredness so the body craves more nicotine to perk up again. Unfortunately, among students who have never smoked conventional cigarettes, but have used e-cigarettes, 43.9 percent say they intend to smoke conventional cigarettes in the next year, which shows e-cigarettes as a gateway into nicotine addiction and use of other tobacco products. Research also indicates about three out of every four teen smokers become adult smokers.3
With a sharp rise in exposure to marketing and the use of e-cigarettes, it is important for adults to speak with their children about the dangers of e-cigarette use, establish clear rules and reasons for them and serve as positive role models to protect against the addiction to nicotine or other unhealthy tobacco use. Tips include:

• Discussing e-cigarette and tobacco use in an open way that doesn't make kids fear they will be judged or punished.

• Start talking with children about the dangers of nicotine and tobacco use when they are young and continue as they grow.

• Discuss and role-play ways to say “no” to peer pressure to try e-cigarettes or other tobacco products.

• Talk with kids about all the negative effects of e-cigarette and tobacco use, including future health problems, the money it takes to support a nicotine habit, bad breath, yellow teeth, smelly clothes, etc.

• Establish firm rules about no use of e-cigarettes or tobacco products in your home and explain why.

• If your child is already using e-cigarettes or other tobacco product, help them to develop a plan to quit and offer information, resources and support. Set up an appointment to discuss potential treatment options with your child’s doctor, who could be an additional source of support for both you and your child.

2 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

**RECIPÉ: Freezer Banana Bites**

Cut bananas into chunks and arrange on a cookie sheet lined with wax or parchment paper. Place a toothpick in each banana. Place in freezer for 1-2 hours. Dip frozen banana chunks in melted semi-sweet or milk chocolate chips or yogurt of your choice. Then, roll in a topping of your choice, such as crushed graham crackers, sprinkles, coconut, sliced almonds, crushed peanuts, chopped pecans, or granola (especially good on yogurt dipped banana). Once rolled, freeze again until chocolate or yogurt is hard. Let children participate and make their own creations with this fun and easy recipe.

Source: www.superhealthykids.com

**ACTIVITY: Fitness Trail**

Create several “fitness stations” (at least one for every participating family member) by designating physical activities in various areas around a room or in different rooms throughout your home. Fitness station ideas include jumping jacks, jog or march in place, arm circles, sit-ups, wall sit, push-ups, dance moves, side-to-side or front/back hops, etc. Let children help decide the activities, they are sure to come up with unique and fun ideas. Each family member chooses one fitness station to begin. Designate one family member to start, stop, and time the activity for 30 seconds to one minute. Switch to the next fitness station by jogging, skipping, hopping, etc. to stay active. Each family member completes every fitness station to finish the fitness trail. Take a water break and repeat the trail as many times as desired, reaching for 20-30 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity.

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