

## **Smoking and Vaping**

*By Alexa Muro*

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse for Teens, “roughly 10.8 million people, including teens, smoke and vape in the U.S. Out of these 10.8 million people, 7 out of 10 high school students and middle school students vape and smoke. Tobacco companies target kids since they are more likely to try it because of the different types of flavors and the addictive chemical nicotine. Smoking has many dangerous effects that can damage your body. It should be stopped because the flavors and ads are targeting youth and the effects are very harmful.

Vaping has many flavors that make it easier to get addicted. Sour Patch Kids, BubbleGum, Cotton Candy are all flavors that have targeted teens and kids. On many vaping or smoking websites they don't ask for people's ages, which makes smoking and vaping easier. These flavors affect teens in many ways. According to KidsHealth's Hillary B. Gordon, “when kids vape with flavors the brain can slow down brain development in teens and affect memory, learning self control, attention, and mood.” Flavors can also increase addiction later on in life, which is why they should remove flavors to these vapes.

Vaping could lead teens to smoking nicotine everyday or chewing tobacco, which have many effects to them such as stains on teeth, problems with breathing, and coughing. If teens continue to smoke, they may get irritation and inflammation of the stomach and intestines which is painful and may lead to cancer. Smoking could also increase risk of painful ulcers along the digestive tract. People that smoke can have trouble smelling and tasting and they'll most likely get wrinkles on their skin. They'll have a higher risk of blindness and could get gum disease. If teens, kids, and adults stop smoking and vaping they are less likely to deal with these effects. If they continue, they are likely to get lung cancer or any of the other health issues listed here.

Sometimes on TV, you see vaping ads that promote vaping and you might think it's not bad if you try it once. Some ads show some teenagers smoking a juul or a cigarette which can encourage teens to smoke. Sometimes when you're driving, you might see a big sign that says “Juuls sold here” or “Vapes are sold here.” Ads should help kids not smoke or vape by showing the effects that could happen in the future. If teens keep smoking and vaping, it could lead to a nicotine addiction later on in life.

Our community can help stop vaping and smoking. There are many ways we can end smoking and vaping. We could have therapy and classes for people that are trying to quit. In these classes we would talk about the effects and what could end up happening if we continue smoking. We could have people that are trying to quit talk to their doctors more about quitting smoking. We could encourage people to exercise and stay busy during the process of ending

smoking. These things could make quitting smoking much easier. Overall, smoking and vaping should be prevented.

Sources:

<https://teens.drugabuse.gov/blog/post/how-does-addiction-taste-flavored-tobacco-products-and-e-cigs-are-no-safer-unflavored>

<https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/e-cigarettes.html#e-cigarettes.html>