

## Helping Parents Understand Vaping

# Supporting Teens to Quit

► Ninety-five percent of lifelong smokers start when they are teens. Using targeted resources and strategies may help teens who smoke or vape manage the quitting process.

Using nicotine as a teen can harm the parts of the brain that control attention, learning, and mood. It also impacts other parts of the body, particularly the lungs, because it leaves a chemical residue behind that causes breathing problems. It is therefore important to help youth stop using nicotine products as soon as possible.

### Quitting and Managing Withdrawal

Quitting is hard. Vaping is not a water-based product; it is a combination of nicotine and chemicals that can quickly create an addiction. If you have never tried to quit an addictive substance, it is important to recognize how difficult it is to quit.

Quitting is a process, and there are many withdrawal symptoms that youth must manage as they remove vaping from their lives. The withdrawal symptoms may affect their schooling, extracurricular activities, and relationships with friends, family, and others.

Here are some of the most common withdrawal symptoms:

- Headache/migraines
- Irritability and agitation
- Anxiety and nervousness
- Difficulty sleeping
- Difficulty concentrating and focusing on tasks
- Strong cravings for nicotine
- Depression
- Feeling tired and sleeping more than usual
- Increased appetite, which can lead to weight gain



Removing nicotine from the body is challenging. It is important for youth who are experiencing nicotine withdrawal to have support from their parents and other people in their lives. It is important to help them manage this process if you want them to quit successfully. Offer encouragement, seek out help, and promote healthy coping skills.

## Helpful Tips for Supporting Youth to Quit

Here are a few resources and strategies that may help youth manage the quitting process:

- Recommend that youth join a free help text service. For example, “This is Quitting” is a 24/7 support network to help youth stop vaping. It is a free and anonymous text messaging program from the Truth Initiative designed to give teens and young adults appropriate recommendations about quitting. Once they sign up, youth can text COPE, STRESS, SLIP, or MORE to receive instant support in those areas. Text DITCHVAPE to 88709 to sign up.
- Introduce youth to Breathwrk, which is a science-backed breathing and meditation exercise app that helps to reduce stress, stay energized, and have much better sleep. Breathwrk has collaborated with the Truth Initiative to establish exercises that will strengthen lungs, relieve anxiety, and cope with triggers and cravings.
- Encourage youth to check out the Quit Vaping section of the <https://smokefree.gov/> website for helpful resources to get youth started on building a quit plan, dealing with cravings, understanding triggers, and more. This website also has an online chat system similar to “This is Quitting.”
- Let youth know about counselors at The National Cancer Institute. Counselors are trained to provide support for youth and adults in English and Spanish. Call Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. central time, 877-44U-QUIT (877-448-7848).
- Be there to talk and provide care when youth experience the physical symptoms of withdrawal (headaches, stomachaches, lack of energy, depression).
- Be aware that youth often start vaping because of stress and/or mental health issues such as depression or anxiety. Addressing mental health issues and reducing stress is important. There are apps, such as Wysa: Mental Health Support for teens, to help with support.
- Help youth engage in hobbies/projects that can keep their minds occupied and in fitness-based activities to boost their mood when they have cravings.
- Review apps for iPhone and Android that can help people quit nicotine. Some examples are Quit Vaping, EasyQuit, and Smoke Free. Review app options and add them for extra support.
- Seek out professionals who can help youth quit and cope. Talk to your pediatrician/family doctor, who can provide options for your family. Counselors and therapists can also be helpful when seeking out support for quitting.
- Find support groups for youth that are in-person and online. An in-person example is “Not on Tobacco (N-O-T)” with a Human, Nutrition, Diet, and Health Cooperative Extension agent. N-O-T is a small support group that meets for ten sessions. Each meeting lasts an hour. The program helps teens quit by addressing total health to develop and maintain positive behaviors. Participants talk about the importance of physical activity, nutrition, enhancing their sense of self-control, and improving life skills such as stress management, decision-making, coping, and interpersonal skills. Additionally, youth learn to recognize their reasons for smoking or vaping, identify healthy alternatives to nicotine use, and find people who will support them in their efforts to quit.



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**New February 2024**, FCS-2787

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