

Vaping and Your Teeth

Understand the dental effects of e-cigarettes



Vaping is on the rise. One in 20 high school students regularly uses electronic cigarettes, or e-cigarettes, according to 2018 data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Teen e-cigarette use jumped over 70% from 2017 to 2018 and has increased almost 13-fold since 2011.

But what does this epidemic mean for dental health?

How vaping hurts your mouth

Despite the lower levels of nicotine in e-cigarettes compared to traditional cigarettes, vaping is still harmful for your teeth.

- **Nicotine increases your risk of gum disease and decay.** Although they contain less of the substance, e-cigarettes still contain the highly addictive substance nicotine, which is linked to gum disease and cavities. For teens, it can also harm brain development.
- **Vaping fluid contains potentially harmful chemicals.** Propylene glycol, used in vaping fluid, can cause dry mouth. This increases your risk of dental disease. And when heated at a high voltage, propylene glycol can transform into formaldehyde, a toxic gas linked to cancer.¹
- **Sweet flavorings can cause cavities.** Sweet flavors like cotton candy and watermelon may actually have a similar chemical makeup to real

candy. These flavors may cause tooth decay, according to a 2018 study in *PLOS One*.²

- **There's not enough research available yet.** Unlike smoking, which has been studied for decades, e-cigs have been around less than 20 years. That leaves a shortage of research, with some harms potentially unknown.

What you can do

If you smoke, e-cigarettes can be a helpful tool in reducing your exposure to nicotine and toxic fumes. Make sure to brush twice a day, floss every day and use fluoride toothpaste. Visit your dentist regularly to keep an eye on your mouth and stop dental disease in its tracks.

If you're not a smoker, stay away from all forms of nicotine. This highly addictive drug can damage your teeth and gums.

¹ Geiss et al (2016). Correlation of volatile carbonyl yields emitted by e-cigarettes with the temperature of the heating coil and the perceived sensorial quality of the generated vapours. *International Journal of Hygiene and Environmental Health*.

² Kim et al (2018). Cariogenic potential of sweet flavors in electronic-cigarette liquids. *PLOS One*.

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