



VAPING

Nicotine dependence

Vapes (e-cigarettes) can contain over 240 chemicals, including the addictive substance nicotine (also found in cigarettes).

Vaping is linked to a range of health harms, including:



Breathlessness



Nicotine dependence



Nicotine poisoning



Throat irritation



Cough



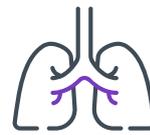
Dizziness



Headaches



Nausea



Lung damage



Serious burns

Nicotine and your brain

The brain keeps developing until you're around 25 years old, and using nicotine regularly can affect your learning, concentration, and memory. It can also make you feel more stressed and worsen depression and anxiety. Nicotine can also rewire parts of the brain responsible for decision-making, self-control and mood. This can make you more likely to become dependent on nicotine and other (addictive) drugs.

Understanding nicotine dependence

Nicotine dependence can develop quickly. The more you vape (or smoke), the more your brain and body get used to nicotine – which is what makes people keep vaping or smoking.

How it works

When your body gets nicotine, the brain receptors release a 'feel-good' chemical called dopamine. It's what makes nicotine addictive, because your brain will tell you to keep vaping (or smoking) to trigger the good feeling.

When someone becomes dependent on nicotine, their brain and body start to need it to feel normal and satisfied.

Signs of nicotine dependence:

- vape soon after waking up in the morning (within 30 minutes)
- vaping alone
- finding it hard to concentrate if you haven't vaped recently
- needing to vape to stay calm or be in a good mood
- feeling stressed, anxious or irritable when you can't vape
- interrupted by thoughts about vaping (cravings) when doing other activities
- don't like leaving the house without a vape
- struggling not to vape in places where it's not allowed (e.g. school, public transport)
- turning to vaping when stressed
- unable to quit vaping.

Common withdrawal symptoms:



Being **down** or irritable.



Being **unable** to concentrate or think clearly.



Feeling **anxious**, restless or jittery.



Not being able to sleep well.



Feeling **more** hungry than usual.



Not being able to **focus** on things apart from vaping.

Understanding nicotine withdrawal

When you stop vaping, you might feel nicotine withdrawal symptoms, but they aren't dangerous and don't last forever. If you're dependent on nicotine, withdrawal symptoms can start in the first few hours of not using nicotine because the nicotine level in your blood drops. This can cause unpleasant physical symptoms, increased anxiety, and strong urges to vape (known as cravings).

After you quit, the physical symptoms usually get better after 1–2 weeks. The mental craving to vape can last longer though as your brain gets used to not having nicotine. Support from friends, family or a health professional can increase your chance of quitting for good.

Where to get help

If you think you or a friend might be dependent on nicotine, help is available. See your local doctor, youth health service, or other health services for help with quitting vaping. The [Quitline](https://www.quitline.org.au) (13 7848) can also help you or visit cleartheair.org.au for quit tips.



Get the facts about vaping at healthywa.wa.gov.au/vaping

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