

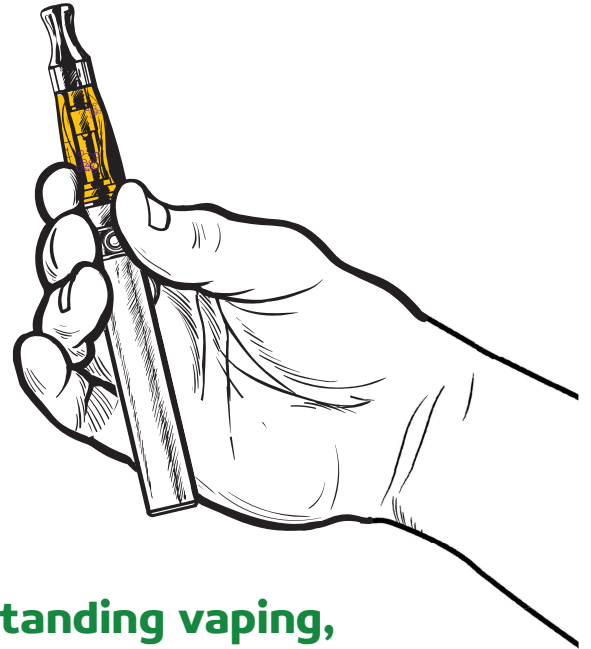


Lung
Foundation
Australia

Vaping and mental health

A resource for parents and carers

Many young people take up vaping thinking that it helps with feelings of stress and anxiety. In reality, it could be making it worse.



Parents and carers can play an important role in supporting young people to quit.

- **Just the facts:** the first step before bringing anything up is to know the facts. Arm yourself with accurate, verifiable, and current information and go from there.
- **Self-reflection:** As a parent or caregiver, the best possible thing you can do is set a positive example. Consider your own smoking and related behaviours before discussing theirs and bring maximum honesty and candour to your conversations.
- **Assumption and judgement:** Never assume, and never judge – this almost always leads to a lack of trust and openness and may have a counterproductive effect or possibly make matters worse.
- **Timing:** Choose your timing wisely, perhaps during a relaxed moment at home, when driving somewhere together, or when no other stress or distractions are present. Be ready to listen with patience, open up to your young person with calmness, ready to listen to what they have to say, without jumping in too fast to correct or sway them.
- **Your approach:** Stay calm and keep the conversation positive. Show your support and that you care.

Understanding vaping, nicotine, and mental health

It is normal for everyone to feel stressed, anxious, or down sometimes and some people may use vaping as a coping mechanism. Vapes can speed up a person's heart rate making them feel more stressed or anxious. This is from the nicotine and can be a sign of nicotine dependence. When a person tries to quit, nicotine withdrawal can leave them feeling anxious or depressed.

Nicotine withdrawal symptoms to be aware of:



Feeling irritated, anxious, or down



Trouble sleeping



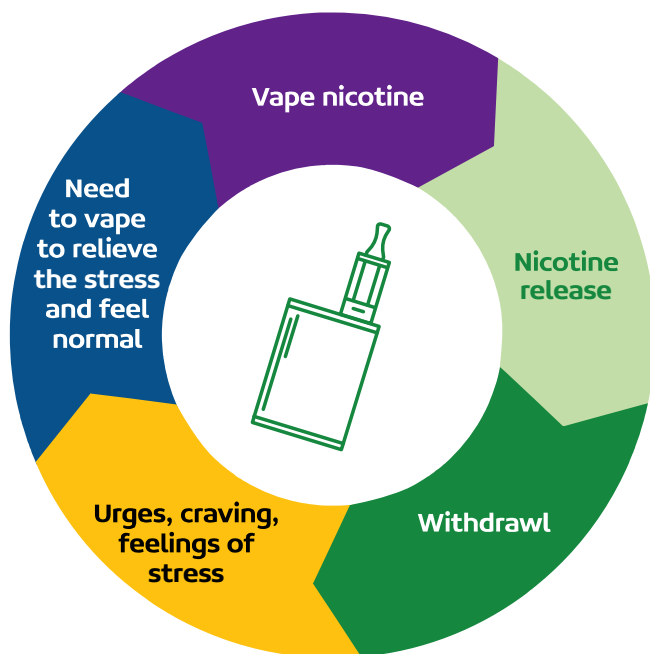
Not being able to focus or think clearly



Changes in appetite.

The cycle of nicotine addiction and withdrawal

The cycle of nicotine addiction and withdrawal can create feelings of stress, anxiety, and depression which impact mental health by causing or worsening stress, anxiety, and other mood disorders. It can be a tough temporary cycle to break but your body will re-learn how to function without nicotine.



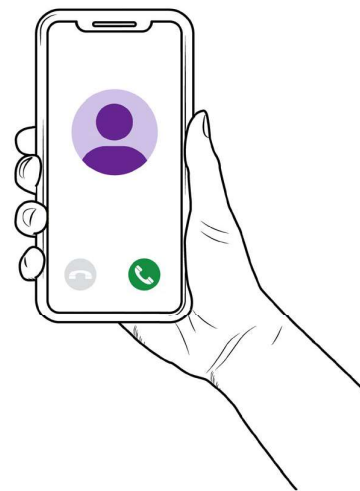
Even though it may not be on the label, one vape can have as much nicotine as 50 cigarettes plus hundreds of other toxic chemicals.

Some of the effects on health from toxic chemicals in vapes includes:

- Lung irritation and disease
- Heart disease
- Skin irritation
- Increase in blood pressure
- Nicotine dependence
- Gum disease and tooth decay
- Memory and learning problems
- Attention disorders
- Impulse control.

Suggestions to help your young person manage stress and anxiety

- **Physical activity:** walk, dance, yoga, or whatever works for them
- **Breathing exercises,** meditation and mindfulness
- **Distractions:** chat with or message a friend, listen to a podcast
- **Self care:** do something they enjoy like watching a movie
- **Learn a new hobby**
- **Chew gum**
- **Make a playlist** of uplifting or motivating music to play when feeling low.



For more advice, tips, and strategies to help your young person quit vaping, you can also consult with your general practitioner (GP) or contact Quitline - 13 QUIT (13 7848) or visit quit.org.au.

For 24/7 mental health support contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 or **chat online**.

Lung Foundation Australia also has a range of resources available to help inform young people on the risks of vaping. Visit our **website** to access the resources.



For further information and support contact Lung Foundation Australia.

[Lungfoundation.com.au](https://lungfoundation.com.au) | Freecall 1800 654 301 | enquiries@lungfoundation.com.au

Note to reader: This information is intended as a general guide only and is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice or treatment. While all care is taken to ensure accuracy at the time of publication, Lung Foundation Australia and its members exclude all liability for any injury, loss or damage incurred by use of or reliance on the information provided. Always consult with your doctor about matters that affect your health.