

# READY TO STOP VAPING?

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A guide on how to access support and advice  
to stop vaping



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## WHY STOP SMOKING?

Vaping products have become the most popular stop-smoking aid used by smokers. There is good evidence that nicotine-containing vapes can help people to quit and many services are now supporting clients with the use of vapes. While some people are happy to vape long-term, some want to stop eventually, and some may want to stop as soon as possible. This leaflet is for those who are seeking support on how best to stop vaping.

When deciding to stop vaping, the priority should always be to ensure that you don't return to smoking cigarettes. NICE recommends that people should use vapes for as long as they help prevent them from going back to smoking. As such, it is important to ask yourself why you want to stop vaping, what the risk of relapse is, and how to plan and prepare appropriately to stop vaping either gradually or in one step.

## REASONS TO QUIT VAPING...

- Wanting to stop inhaling any substance.
- Worry about the cost of vaping.
- Confident in being able to stay smoke-free without vaping.
- Claims about the harm of vaping.
- Advice to stop vaping from family / friends / healthcare team.
- Concern about vaping more than they used to smoke.

Common reasons for wanting to stop vaping include cost, not wanting to be dependent upon vaping and concerns over the health effects of inhaling substances into your lungs. Some

people want to stop vaping because of concerns from inaccurate press reports and / or opinions from others. Pressure to stop can also come from family members who worry about the safety of vaping or from concern that they are vaping too much. Some may feel that vaping is not helpful to them, that it is not reducing tobacco withdrawal symptoms or helping them manage without cigarettes. Others may feel they are simply at a stage where they are ready to discontinue vaping and are not at risk of relapse. Often these people have been using a vape for some time as a quit aid and view stopping vaping as the next goal. Some of these are valid reasons to stop vaping, some less so. Understanding the role vaping has in keeping yourself smoke-free can help you to make informed decisions about how best to stop vaping.

## **MAKING AN INFORMED DECISION**

Acknowledge your success with quitting smoking and your interest in stopping vaping. You should be reassured that if it helps you not smoke, there is no rush to stop using your vape. What we don't want is for people to feel that they must stop vaping before they are ready, increasing the risk of a relapse to smoking. If you are ready to stop, there are options for stopping vaping gradually or in one step.

## **REMINDER ABOUT SAFETY**

It is important to clarify any misinformation about the safety of vaping and remember what the evidence says about long-term use of vapes. It can also be useful to remember the role that vaping played in helping you to quit smoking. Some people may wish to stop vaping before they are ready because they believe that vaping or nicotine is harmful.

If you are worried about the frequency of which you are using your vape, it can also be helpful to remember you may need to use your vape more frequently than you were smoking cigarettes. Frequent 'grazing' is common among vapers to get more nicotine, unlike the 'bingeing' of nicotine when people smoke cigarettes.

- Vapes are less harmful than smoking because they do not involve the burning of tobacco.
- Evidence indicates that e-cigarettes are 95% less harmful to health than smoking tobacco.
- Short term use of vapes appear to pose few if any risks.
- More than half of ex-smokers who are vapers report they have been vaping for more than 3 years.
- Nicotine is a fairly harmless component of both cigarettes and e-cigarettes.
- There is no evidence to date of harm to bystanders from exposure to second-hand vapour.
- The vapour contains a small fraction of the toxicants in tobacco smoke.

## **VAPING NOT WORKING**

Some people feel that vaping is not working for them, but it is important to consider if you are using the best device for you, using the device correctly, and using the appropriate strength of nicotine. The most common reason for not feeling that vaping is working is using an e-liquid with too low a strength of nicotine. The majority of people who vape have opted not to use

nicotine-containing e-liquid or to use a low dose nicotine liquid. It is important to get enough nicotine to reduce withdrawal symptoms and urges to smoke.

Your stop smoking service or local vape shops should be able to advise on e-liquid nicotine strength and choice and use of vape products.

## **STOPPING VAPING**

### **Gradual reduction for people who would like to reduce their vaping over time:**

- Reducing the nicotine strength of their product at intervals (20mg - 18mg - 12mg - 6mg - 3mg - 0mg). The speed at which people reduce will differ but if you are in the early stages of quitting or at risk of relapse you should reduce more slowly. People who have stopped smoking cigarettes for 12 weeks or longer can set progressive goals to reduce every two to four weeks or longer as needed, without any pressure to rush the process.
- Extending the time between vaping (e.g. 20 minutes between vaping becomes 40 minutes).
- Setting rules for yourself about where you do and do not vape, to gradually reduce use (e.g. only use when outside of the home or car, only on breaks at work). This will weaken the link between vaping and specific situations and times.

## **One-step stop for clients who feel ready to simply stop vaping, and do not want to gradually reduce:**

- See how you feel as you go through the day without vaping.
- Use techniques for managing urges to smoke / vape, such as distraction and commitment to the 'not-a-puff' rule.
- You can return to vaping if you would otherwise have a cigarette as this is far less harmful.
- Minimise risk of relapse to smoking. If there is any risk of relapse to smoking, vaping should be maintained, or the reduction should be paused. The greatest priority is to make sure that you don't start smoking again.

## **Disposable vapes:**

It's not easy to gradually reduce the dose with a disposable vape because there isn't the variety of nicotine strengths available.

- Switch to a tank system vape so that a gradual reduction in nicotine can be started.
- Use reduction strategies that don't rely on reducing nicotine dose.
- Restricting where you vape and the length of time that you vape for (e.g. taking shorter puffs).
- Disposables can be bought with zero nicotine strength, so alternating between nicotine and no nicotine vapes could work for some people.

## RELAPSE PREVENTION

Planning ahead is important to help to stay quit so that if at any point you think that you are at risk of returning to smoking, you should resume vaping. It could be worth keeping a vape at hand for 'emergency' situations when a sudden trigger causes an urge to smoke. Remember that a relapse to vaping is not a failure and is significantly less harmful than smoking.

## RESOURCES ON VAPING

### **One You Plymouth**

Tel: 01752 437177

Email: [oneyou.plymouth@nhs.net](mailto:oneyou.plymouth@nhs.net)

Web: [www.oneyouplymouth.co.uk](http://www.oneyouplymouth.co.uk)

### **NHS - Using cigarettes to stop smoking**

[www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/using-e-cigarettes-to-stop-smoking](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/using-e-cigarettes-to-stop-smoking)

### **The SWITCH**

A comprehensive series of films produced by NCSCT with the New Nicotine Alliance provides an overview of vaping and vapes, the safety of vaping, and the experiences of smokers who have made the switch.

<https://tinyurl.com/the-switch>

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