

# 12 key facts about e-cigarettes

As a smoker, the best thing you can do for your health is to stop smoking completely and for good.

Free support is available from local stop smoking services  
[www.nhs.uk/smokefree](http://www.nhs.uk/smokefree)

1. Many people have found e-cigarettes helpful for quitting smoking. The number of e-cigarette users who are ex-smokers is growing.

Research has shown that e-cigarettes can be effective, with similar or better results than nicotine replacement therapy products such as patches.

2. E-cigarettes allow you to inhale nicotine through a vapour rather than smoke. They do not contain or burn tobacco and do not produce tar or carbon monoxide.

While it is nicotine that causes tobacco to be so addictive, on its own it is more or less harmless to most people.

3. The main harm from smoking comes from the thousands of chemicals found in tobacco smoke, 69 of which cause cancer.

These harmful chemicals in tobacco smoke are either not there in e-cigarette vapour or, if present, are at much lower levels.

4. E-cigarette use, known as 'vaping', is not completely risk free but it is much less harmful than smoking. E-cigarettes are estimated to be at least 95% safer.

**E-cigarettes  
are at least 95%  
less harmful  
than smoking**

5. There is no evidence of harm to bystanders from exposure to e-cigarette vapour and experts have assessed the risks to be extremely low.

This is very different to the strong evidence of harm to bystanders from exposure to second-hand cigarette smoke.

6. The most effective way to quit smoking is with expert help and advice from your local stop smoking service.

People who combine this support with using an e-cigarette have some of the highest quitting success rates.

7. In Yorkshire, smoking rates are at their lowest level with more than 4 in 5 people not smoking.

This is because many national and local stop smoking policies and interventions have been implemented since the harm of tobacco was realised.

We expect smoking rates will continue to fall as smoking becomes more denormalised in society.

8. Because e-cigarettes are still quite new, we do not have information on the effect long-term use will have on health. More research is needed in the future.

9. In the UK, e-cigarettes are tightly regulated for quality and safety. New regulations introduced in May 2016 require manufacturers to meet new safety standards, including specifying the ingredients used in their product and limiting the size of tanks and refills.

10. E-cigarette use is not covered by UK smokefree laws. This means managers of public places and workplaces should distinguish clearly between vaping and smoking. When developing their smokefree policies employers should ensure vapers are not confined to areas where smoking is permitted. This may undermine a person's ability to quit smoking and stay smokefree.

11. E-cigarettes are available in different models including 'cigalikes', pen-shaped devices and box-shaped tank devices - you may need to try a few to find out which suits you.

12. E-cigarettes are not recommended for young people or non-smokers. There is no evidence so far that e-cigarettes are acting as a route into smoking for young people or non-smokers.

Regular use of e-cigarettes among young people is rare and most often only seen in those who have already smoked.

In England it is illegal to sell e-cigarette products to anyone under the age of 18 or for adults to buy them on behalf of under-18s.

**NOTE: The information contained in this, and associated documents on e-cigarettes, does not apply to tobacco heat not burn products.**

If you have any questions about quitting smoking through switching to e-cigarettes contact your local stop smoking service:

[www.nhs.uk/smokefree](http://www.nhs.uk/smokefree)

Further information and a list of references can be found in the Yorkshire Cancer Research "Position Statement on Electronic Cigarettes".

[www.ycr.org.uk](http://www.ycr.org.uk)

