

VAPING: Myths, Facts, and Effective Conversations
An Evening talk with West Bay Elementary Parents with Dr. Erin Smith
Summary sheet for Parents
February 5, 2020

The 4 most common myths I hear about vaping are as follows:

- 1) *Everyone does it*
- 2) *It's just water*
- 3) *It's safe*
- 4) *It's safer than cigarettes* (this is true, but context matters – this only applies to current adult smokers who are trying to quit smoking)

Here is a selection of resources for parents looking for additional information about vaping:

1. An educational website: <https://www.catch.org/pages/cmb-parent-resources>
2. Quick Facts document from the CDC:
https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/Quick-Facts-on-the-Risks-of-E-cigarettes-for-Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults.html
3. Parent tip sheet: surgeon general (US):
https://ecigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/SGR_ECig_ParentTipSheet_508.pdf
4. Youtube: What is an e-cigarette and how does it work?
https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLwVxvUtgsPsgZvsQmKxV7U6b8DNY_Uolu&v=fDYBJuAXy00&feature=emb_title
5. Youtube video from Vox: How Juul made nicotine go viral:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFOpokBUyok>
6. Health Canada information on vaping risks: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/smoking-tobacco/vaping/risks.html>
7. Health Canada Parent tip sheet:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health/publications/healthy-living/talking-teen-vaping-tip-sheet-parents.html>

When having a conversation with your older child/teen about vaping, remember the “3 C’s”

COMFORT

COLLABORATION (ask open ended questions, find out what they already know, provide short amounts of relevant information, ask what they think about what you’ve shared)

CHECK BACK IN

Some families have opportunistic conversations (example: driving by someone who is vaping, using that as an opportunity to have a discussion) and other families prefer to have important discussions at a scheduled time or during a meal together.

There is no one right way to have this conversation!

Remember the Ask-Share-Ask approach for creating a dialogue with your child. Try not to lecture teens without giving them a chance to share their thoughts as they really appreciate the opportunity to share their thoughts and perspective. This helps teens (and most people in general) feel respected during difficult conversations.

Here are some examples of open-ended questions you could ask:

- *What have you heard about vaping?*
- *Why do you think people vape?*
- *What are some of the downsides that you’ve heard about?*
- *What might you say if someone offered/pressured you about this?*

Remember, these conversations are a journey, not a destination. It may feel uncomfortable, especially if your teen has heard (and believes) a lot of the myths, but what matters is that you are talking about it together at all!

Lastly, outside of conversations around vaping or other potentially difficult subjects, being a parent can be really stressful! Remember to be kind to yourself – you are doing your best! – and mindful of your own self-care: nutrition, exercise, sleep hygiene, having time for yourself, and supports.