

Tobacco Harm Reduction: Myths vs Reality

In response to consumer demand and heightened awareness of the dangers of smoking traditional combustible cigarettes, innovative reduced risk devices are being offered to consumers. It is important for Congress and the Food and Drug Administration to recognize the importance of these new products such as vaping and new “heat not burn” technology. Millions of people around the world are seeing the benefits of these new harm reduction products, and evidence shows they have the capacity to save 6.6 million American lives over the next decade.¹

Unfortunately, there are many **Myths** about these new products and technologies, leading to bad public policy and hindering quit efforts as 70% of the public incorrectly believes vaping is as dangerous as smoking.² In **Reality**, the evidence is overwhelming that these products are saving lives and giving smokers a legitimate exit ramp to quitting smoking traditional combustible cigarettes.

MYTH:

Vaping is dangerous, and we just don't know what the health consequences may be

Vaping doesn't help smokers to quit, it just adds more damage and danger

E-Cigarettes will cause more kids to smoke

“Sweet” vaping flavors encourage kids to use e-cigarettes

We already have enough quitting aids, we don't need more

REALITY:

Vaping is 95% SAFER than smoking cigarettes

“Best estimates show e-cigarettes are 95% less harmful to your health, than normal cigarettes, and when supported by a smoking cessation service, help most smokers to quit tobacco altogether”³

Vaping helps smokers to give up harmful cigarettes

“Smokers in the US who attempt to quit with the aid of e-cigarettes were over 73% more likely to succeed than those who do not use vapes”⁴ and twice as likely as those using conventional Nicotine Replacement Therapy like patches or gum.⁵

Smoking rates for high school student have fallen by 1/3rd since e-cigarettes were introduced

“Since vapes were introduced in 2011, the amount of high school students smoking has plummeted from 21.8% to 13.9%”⁶. “Data from large national cross-sectional studies provide no evidence that kids' use of e-cigarettes is increasing smoking. If anything, those data suggest the opposite”⁷

Flavorings do not affect use for adolescents

“No statistically significant difference between flavored and non-flavored e-cigarettes in piquing the interest of teenagers”⁸

Variety and access is key

A 2016 Consumer Advocates for Smoke-Free Alternatives Association (CASAA) survey of 27,343 e-cigarette users found that 72% of respondents “credited tasty flavors with helping them give up tobacco”⁹ and “e-cigarettes “contribute to both perceived pleasure and the effort to reduce cigarette consumption or quit smoking”¹⁰

1 Levy DT, Borland R, Lindblom EN, Goniewicz ML, Meza R, Holford TR, et al. Potential deaths averted in USA by replacing cigarettes with e-cigarettes. Tobacco control. 2017 DOI: 10.1136/tobaccocontrol-2017-<https://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/content/27/1/18>

2 Huang J, Feng B, Weaver SR, Pechacek TF, Slovic P, Eriksen MP. Changing Perceptions of Harm of e-Cigarette vs Cigarette Use Among Adults in 2 US National Surveys From 2012 to 2017. JAMA Netw Open March 29, 2019. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2729471>

3 E-cigarettes: an evidence update. Public Health England. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/e-cigarettes-around-95-less-harmful-than-tobacco-estimates-landmark-review>

4 Zhu S. E-cigarette use and associated changes in population smoking cessation. BMJ 2017 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC526046/>

5 A Randomized Trial of E-Cigarettes versus Nicotine-Replacement Therapy, Hajep, P et al. New England Journal of Medicine. February, 2019.- <https://www.nejm.org/doi/10.1056/NEJMoa1808779>

6 Vital Signs: Tobacco Product Use Among Middle and High School Students, Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, February 2019 <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/mm6806e1.htm>

7 Kowolowski L, Warner K. Adolescents and e-cigarettes. Objects of concern may appear larger than they are. Drug Alc Depend 2017. <https://www.buffalo.edu/content/dam/www/news/documents/Study%20PDFs/Kozlowski-Warner-DAD-2017-inpress.pdf>

8 <https://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/content/early/2019/03/08/tobaccocontrol-2018-054584>

9 <http://www.casaa.org/news/casaa-comment-to-fda-on-flavors/>

10 Konstantinos E. Farsalinos, et al., “Impact of Flavor Variability on Electronic Cigarette Use Experience: An Internet Survey,” International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health 10 (December 2013): <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3881166/>