

CANVAS

Comprehensive Approach for **Nicotine & Vaping** Action in Schools

What is CANVAS?

CANVAS supports Alberta schools in taking a comprehensive, school-wide approach to addressing nicotine and vaping. Grounded in the **Comprehensive School Health (CSH) framework**, the program helps schools create environments where staff and students have the **knowledge, skills, and support** to either inform or make informed decisions about nicotine-use, vaping and health.

The **CANVAS checklist** guides implementation and tracks progress. The resources provide practical tools aligned with the four pillars of CSH to support prevention, awareness, and healthier school environments.

[CSH](#)

[CANVAS checklist](#)

[Contact](#)

Resources

Provide staff and students with knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about nicotine and vaping.

- Junior high video discussion
- Senior high presentation
- Useful links (educators)
- Staff presentation
- Classroom lessons

Create supportive school environments that discourage vaping and promote healthy choices.

- Monthly announcements
- Interactive activities
- Free posters and signage

Support consistent school approaches to vaping prevention and response.

- Healthier Together: Clear the air
- Vaping policy cheat sheet

Connect schools with resources and services that support student health.

- Community resources & services
- Parent engagement presentation
- Useful links (parents)
- Quitting support for youth

CANVAS Checklist

Comprehensive Approach for Nicotine & Vaping Action in Schools

The CANVAS Checklist supports schools in selecting and implementing strategies that best fit their needs, capacity, and context.

This tool helps school health champions identify priorities, take action, and track progress.

Quick Start

1. Identify a health champion or small team

Choose a staff member or group to support CANVAS implementation.

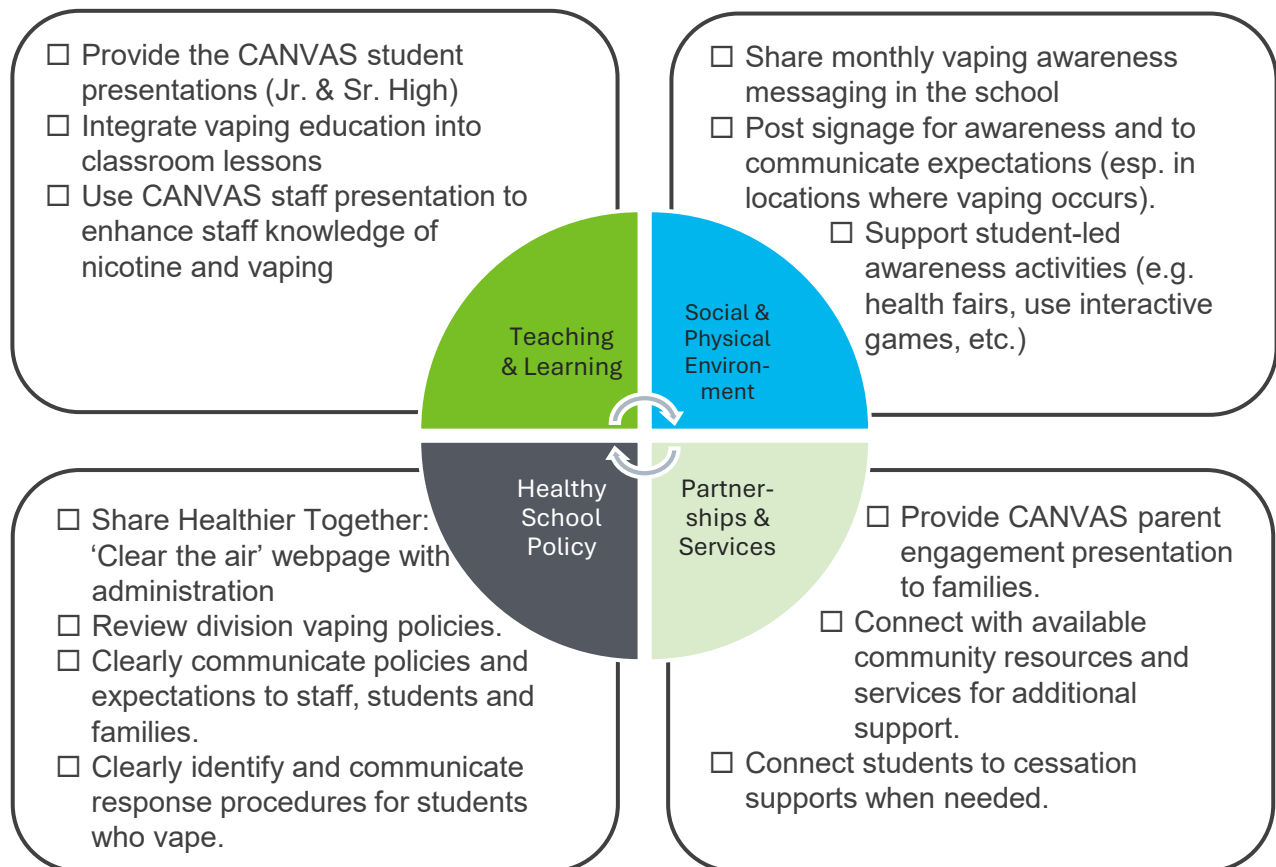
2. Choose 1–3 actions to start

Select actions from any area below that fit your school's priorities.

3. Take action & track progress

Use the checkboxes to monitor progress and build momentum.

Choose actions from any area



Reflect & Continue

- Review progress on actions taken
- Identify what worked well
- Select next actions to continue building a healthy school environment
- Contact local health promotion team or tvcp@primarycarealberta.ca for support, if needed

Teachers' Guide: Using Videos to Spark Discussions About Vaping

Purpose

This guide supports teachers in using videos as conversation starters about vaping, helping students think critically and make safer personal choices.



Ctrl+Click image for link to video

Source: Ophea Canada

Before the Video

1. Preview the Content

- Watch the video in full before showing it to students.
- Note the key messages and discussion questions included in the video.
- Identify any areas that might need clarification or extra context for your class.

2. Set the Scene

- Remind students this is a **judgment-free discussion** where everyone's ideas are respected.
- Explain that the goal is to **think, reflect, and talk**—not to give “right” or “wrong” answers.
- Define key terms if needed (e.g., *vaping, nicotine, peer pressure, addiction*).

3. Create a Safe Space

- Encourage open and respectful participation.
 - Consider allowing anonymous responses (e.g., using sticky notes, or online polls) for sensitive questions.
-

During the Video

1. Active Viewing

- Ask students to pay attention to key moments or questions that stand out to them.
- Pause the video at discussion points to let ideas sink in or to clarify information.

2. Encourage Engagement

- Prompt students to jot down quick thoughts or feelings after each question or section.
 - Use pair-share or small group discussions before moving to a whole-class conversation.
-

After the Video

1. Guide the Discussion

- Use the built-in video questions as your main prompts.
- For further discussion/conversation, ask follow-ups like:
 - *Why do you think people your age might feel pressure to vape?*
 - *What would make it easier to say no in a real situation?*
 - *What surprised you about the video?*

2. Reinforce Key Messages

- Emphasize that vaping has real health effects, especially for youth.
- Highlight positive choices, supports, and reliable sources for information.
- Encourage students to reflect on what influences their decisions.

3. Wrap Up

- Summarize the main ideas discussed.
 - Invite students to share one takeaway or one question they still have.
 - Provide [optional resources](#) for students who want to learn more or need support.
-

Tips for Success

- ✓ Keep discussions short and focused.
- ✓ Validate all contributions—avoid lecturing or judging.
- ✓ Use follow-up questions that start with *what*, *how*, or *why* to deepen reflection.
- ✓ Link the conversation to real-life decision-making and personal values.

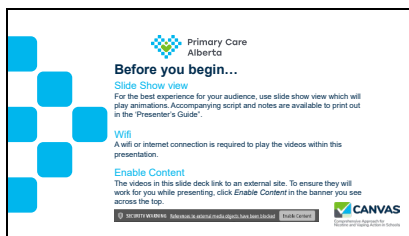
Presentation Guide

IMPORTANT: This guide includes speaker notes and suggested script to support delivery of the CANVAS presentation. To access the accompanying PowerPoint slide deck, go to primarycarealberta.ca/tobaccovapingprevention.

Clearing the Air: Let's Talk Vapes

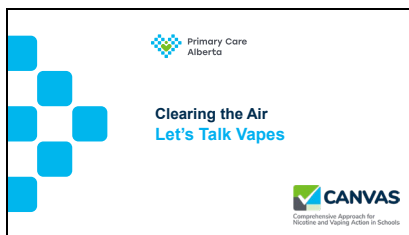


Slide
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Housekeeping information for the presenter.

Slide
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• Speaker Introduction

Introduce topic – We're going to talk about e-cigarettes (vapes) today.

Slide
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Let's take a look at today's topics:

- We'll start by defining what vapes are.
- Then, we'll examine their effects on health.
- After that, we'll discuss reasons why some young people choose to use nicotine products.

Lastly, we'll explore where you can find more support and information.

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Let's start with a basic question: What is an e-cigarette (or vape)?

An e-cigarette is a device that heats a liquid and turns it into an aerosol, which the user breathes in. This is important to know because it tells us what people are actually inhaling. Even though it's called "vaping," users are not breathing in vapour—they're breathing in aerosol.

As you can see on the slide, e-cigarettes come in a variety of shapes and sizes. You've probably heard them called by different names—like vapes (already discussed), vape pens, e-hookahs, tank systems, or mods.

- Have you heard of any other names?

We've already talked about how users breathe in aerosol when they vape. Let's take a look at the variety of substances found in aerosol.

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- Nicotine – which we'll explore more shortly
- Heavy metals – like nickel, tin, and lead.
- Toxic chemicals – including formaldehyde.

Does anyone know what formaldehyde is commonly used for?

Formaldehyde is used in science labs to preserve dead animals and in funeral homes to preserve bodies.

What are your thoughts about this statement?

For some of you, this may be new information.

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Most e-cigarettes do contain nicotine.

So how do you know if an e-cigarette has nicotine in it?

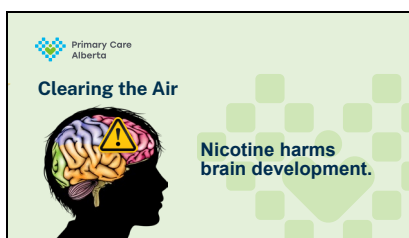
- Vapes sold in Canada have specific labelling regulations.
- There must be a nicotine concentration statement displaying how much nicotine is in the product.
- Additionally, every vaping product that contains nicotine must display a health warning.

Source: Health Canada, [Vaping Products Labelling and Packaging Regulations](#)

Any thoughts about this?

Your brain's still under construction!

Slide
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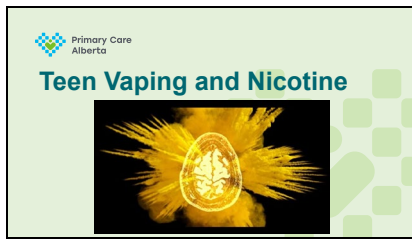
It keeps growing and changing until you're about 25. That means during your teen years, it's super sensitive and a lot easier to mess with.

Using nicotine (like vaping or using nicotine pouches) can impact how you focus, learn, remember things, and control your impulses. Plus, teens get hooked on nicotine much faster than adults.

Bottom line: your brain's got a lot going on!

Click on the slide to play the video.

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After playing the video, ask students questions to generate conversation.

Example Questions:

- What did you learn?
- Did anything jump out at you?
- What did you take away from this video?

The video also discussed stress. We'll talk a bit more about this shortly.

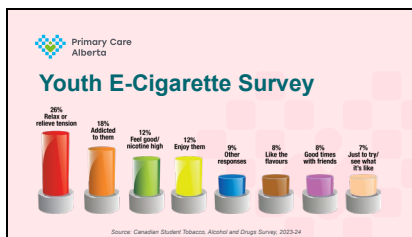
Source: Health Canada : *Teen vaping and nicotine (video)* - Canada.ca

Slide
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- When someone vapes near you, you're breathing in the chemicals they exhale. This is called second-hand exposure.
- Something to think about... Just being near someone who's vaping can be risky. Even if you don't vape, being around others who do can still affect you

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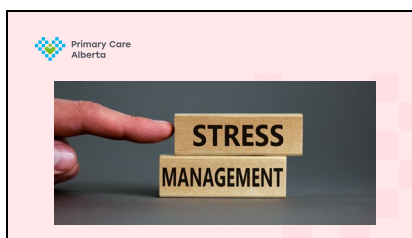
According to this survey, the top reason students in Alberta say they use e-cigarettes is to deal with stress and tension and the second highest reason is because students feel hooked on them. Others use e-cigarettes to feel good or have a high, because their friends use them, or because they're curious.

Seeing that stress is the number one reason people use vapes, let's talk about other ways to deal with stress.

Brainstorm ways to deal with stress- use a SmartBoard to record students' answers or have students work in pairs or small groups.

- Examples: exercise, play a sport, read a book, listen to music, call a friend/parent, have a bath/shower, get outdoors, walk the dog, draw/paint, play a musical instrument, deep breathing, baking/cooking, crafts, etc.
- Having multiple coping strategies can help you feel confident about handling your stress.

Slide
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References:

1. <https://www.thetruth.com/the-facts/fact-vaping-nicotine-and-stress>
2. Kutlu MG, Gould TJ. Nicotine modulation of fear memories and anxiety: Implications for learning and anxiety disorders. *Biochemical* Published Online First: 2015/08/02.

3. Lechner WV, Janssen T, Kahler CW, et al. Bi-directional associations of electronic and combustible cigarette use onset patterns with depressive symptoms in adolescents. *Preventive Medicine* 2017;96:73-78.

Feeling pressure from friends or people around you can make it tough to know what to say or how to act in the moment.

Understanding where that pressure is coming from and how someone might be trying to influence you, makes it easier to recognize it and respond confidently.

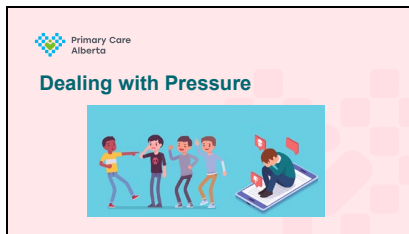
Saying “no” to something you’re not comfortable with, like vaping or nicotine pouches, isn’t always simple. It can feel awkward, or even risky if you’re worried about what others might think.

The more you prepare for social situations, the more confident you’ll be. Practicing your response ahead of time might feel weird—but it works. It helps you stay in control instead of being caught off guard.

Source:

www.notanexperiment.ca/resisting-pressure-to-vape/ent

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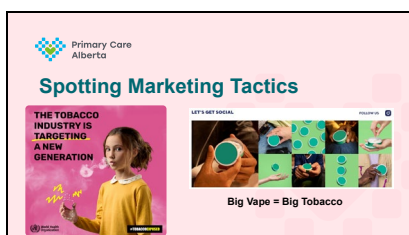
The tobacco industry spends *millions* of dollars trying to get people - especially young people - hooked on their products.

Brainstorm - What marketing tactics do you think these companies use? – (large group or small groups)

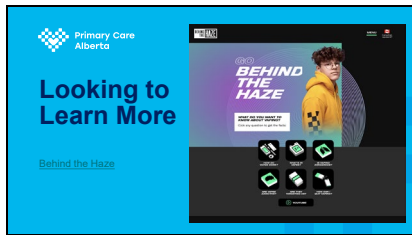
- Here’s what’s really happening:
- Tobacco companies are all over social media. Why? Because that’s where teens are. They want to catch your attention, boost their sales, and stay trendy.
- Instead of saying “nicotine” or “tobacco,” they use softer words like “vaping” or “vapour.” Sounds like mist, right? But that “mist” as we’ve already discussed contains harmful chemicals and nicotine.
- Their ads are colorful and eye-catching on purpose. They know how to grab your attention and influence how you feel about their products.
- A lot of these companies pay influencers to promote products like e-cigarettes or nicotine pouches. They want you to see their content, like it, share it, and maybe even try it.
- The truth is: these companies are using smart strategies in hopes of manipulating you.

Source: <https://med.stanford.edu/tobaccopreventiontoolkit/you-and-me-together-vape-free-curriculum/hs-lesson-4-dont-be-played-how-tobacco-marketing-targets-youth.html>

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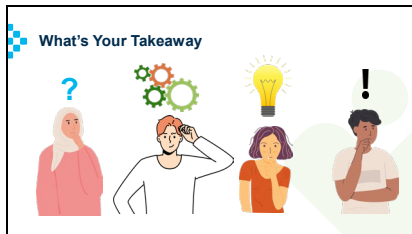
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If you want to learn more about e-cigarettes, you can also check out:

[Get the Facts About Vaping | Behind The Haze](#)

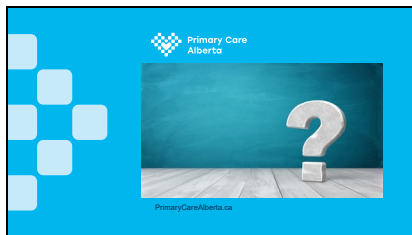
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We've covered a lot today.... Think about your own takeaway and what you learned today.

If you'd like to talk about it more, please come and see myself, school counsellor, wellness coach, etc.
Customize the individuals available in your school to fit this last statement.

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Any final questions or thoughts?

CLEARING THE AIR: What educators need to know about vaping

Learn more
about vape
devices



**Health Canada:
About Vaping**

Learn about
vaping (for
youth)



**Behind the
Haze: Alberta**



Tools for
teachers and
schools



**Not an
Experiment**



**Teachers'
Vaping Toolkits**



**Healthier
Together Schools**

Supporting
students to
quit vaping



**Quash:
Conversations**



**Smoke Free
Teen**



**Quash: Quitting
App**

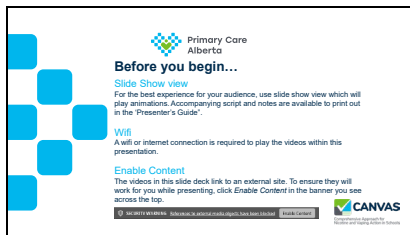
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Clearing the Air: What educators need to know about vaping



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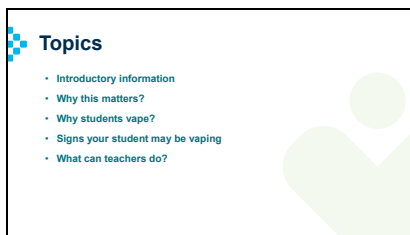
Housekeeping information for the presenter.

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Introductions: Name, Role and Topic

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Let's run through the topics we will be covering today.

- Introductory information
- Why this matters?
- Why young people vape?
- Signs your child may be vaping
- What can parents do?

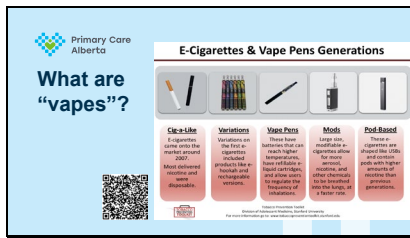
We're pleased to share this presentation from Primary Care Alberta (PCA). If any questions arise that we can't fully answer today, we'll reach out to PCA to get the information you need and follow up by email.

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Vaping is the act of inhaling and exhaling an aerosol, often containing nicotine and other chemicals (not just water vapour), produced by an electronic device like an e-cigarette.

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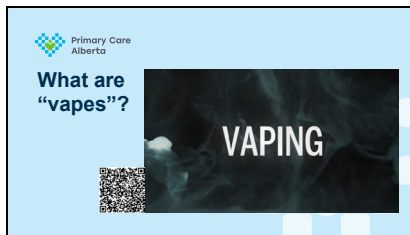


Many of you may already be familiar with e-cigarettes or “vapes” so this is a quick overview.

Vapes have changed over the years, beginning on the left with those made to look as much like cigarettes as possible. This was followed by modifications and optimizations to produce products over time that maximized the amount of nicotine absorbed by the consumer. Focus was also placed on design and technologies to promote trends and increase use.

Source: <https://med.stanford.edu/tobaccopreventiontoolkit/curriculum-decision-maker/by-module/E-Cigs.html>

Slide
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Click on slide to play the video.

Despite the design changes over time, the underlying mechanics of vaping remain the same. This video describes how vapes work.

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vbNrlsR-pnl>

If you'd like to read more information to understand the devices, how they work, and what they contain, you can use the **QR Code** to access Health Canada's page on vaping devices. This link is also listed in your handbook.

Source: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/smoking-tobacco/vaping.html>

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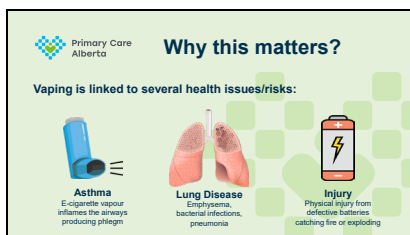


Presenters: Use the notes below to describe the stats in this image. Make it relatable by discussing what you are seeing/experiencing at your school.

In Alberta, for each student who says they are currently smoking (4.3% of students in Grades 7-12 have smoked a cigarette in the past 30-days), there are over 3 times the number of students who say they are currently vaping (15.6% have vaped in the past 30-days).

Source: <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/substance-use/csads/>

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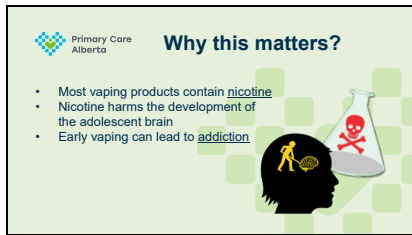


Known health issues linked to vaping include:

- Asthma
- Emphysema, lung infections and pneumonia
- Defective batteries have caused fires or explosions leading to injury

Source: <https://behindthehaze.ca/vaping-risks>

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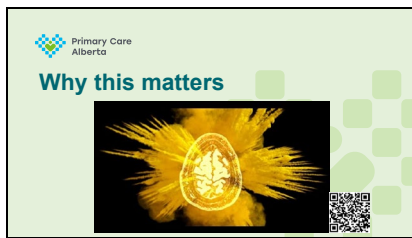


- Most vaping products contain nicotine which is known to have adverse health effects.
- For adolescents especially, nicotine harms brain development which continues up to age 25.
- Nicotine is highly addictive, and youth are particularly vulnerable to this, sometimes showing signs of addiction before they start regular or daily use.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/e-cigarettes/health-effects.html>

Click on the slide to play the video.

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This video provides an overview of nicotine and addiction resulting from vaping. The video can also be used in classrooms or assemblies to inform students about nicotine, how it works, and how it ultimately leads to addiction. We will now watch the video together. More information like this, geared towards students is available on BehindtheHaze.ca, a website created to help teens understand vaping. The **QR code** for BehindtheHaze is on the screen but also listed in your handout.

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XDYPaEiDUJ0>

While risk-taking is considered normal and developmentally appropriate behavior for youth, we know there is an important difference between healthy and unhealthy risk-taking.

Research shows that adolescents' decision-making around risks differs from adults in a number of ways:

- Lower risk perception: They underestimate risks and may even perceive more potential benefits from their actions. Lower risk perception: They underestimate risks and may even perceive more potential benefits from their actions. In fact, in a 2023-24 survey of Alberta students, 17% of students report perceiving a low risk of harm from using e-cigarettes with nicotine on a regular basis. 40% of them report perceiving low risk of harm from using e-cigarettes without nicotine regularly.
- Less intuitive reasoning: They lack the education and experience to decide based on their intuition, whereas adults can engage in this type of "gist-based" reasoning. This often leads to students make decisions in a different way, as shown in the next point.
- More emotion-based reasoning: They don't just weigh the risks they think about the social consequences of their decisions. This highlights the need for health

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education that targets social competencies to equip students with resilience and responsible decision-making skills.

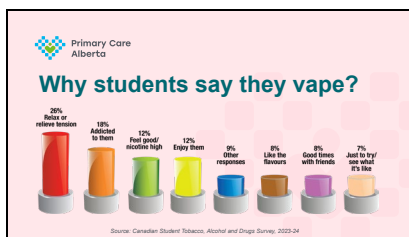
- Limited knowledge: They may have a limited understanding of the possible consequences of their actions. Facilitating students in gaining reliable and accurate information on vaping is an important piece of prevention and can be done using some of the ready-to-use classroom resources found in the CANVAS package of resources.

Source: <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/substance-use/csads/>

Source: *National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine: Health and Medicine Division; Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education; Board on Children, Youth, and Families; Committee on Applying Lessons of Optimal Adolescent Health to Improve Behavioral Outcomes for Youth; Kahn NF, Graham R, editors. Promoting Positive Adolescent Health Behaviors and Outcomes: Thriving in the 21st Century. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2019 Dec 12. 3. The Current Landscape of Adolescent Risk Behavior. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK554988/>*

The top reason that over a quarter of Alberta students reported as the reason they vape, is to **relieve tension or stress**, and the second highest reason reported, is because they feel hooked on them. Other reasons reported include feeling good or even high when vaping, or generally just enjoying them. 8% of students surveyed even reported it is because they like the flavours.

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Within the blue bar in the chart, 9% of students gave a range of other responses including reasons such as peer pressure and using them instead of smoking cigarettes or to quit cigarettes.

Presenters: An optional interactive question on “Were you surprised by these results? What was surprising?” can be asked here to spark discussion.

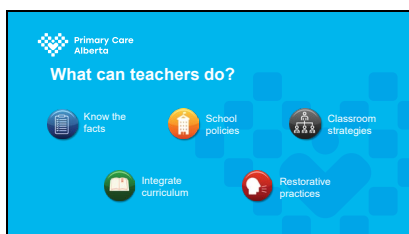
Source: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/canadian-student-tobacco-alcohol-drugs-survey/2021-2022-detailed-tables.html>

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Signs your teen might be vaping

- Unusual smells on clothes or breath (fruity, minty)
- Becomes more thirsty
- Changes in sleep patterns or mood (irritable, anxious)
- Frequent bathroom breaks
- Secretive behaviour (protective of phones/pockets, excuses to leave)
- Having frequent nosebleeds

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- **Know the facts:** Get credible information from reliable sources such as those in your handout. Avoid scare tactics or exaggerating the negatives. If there is something you don't know, find the answer together – you do not have to be an expert. The goal is to help students get accurate information from reliable sources.
- **School policies:** Review your school's vaping policy and be consistent with supporting enforcement. Advocate for prevention programs and activities in your school.
- **Classroom strategies:** Promote belonging and connection in class through open and non-judgmental discussions. Use collaborative classroom agreements on respect and safety to set boundaries and expectations. Teaching stress management and problem-solving skills can build protective factors within each student.
- **Integrate curriculum:** Incorporate prevention into classroom learning opportunities (health, science, advisory). Curriculum resources are available through the CANVAS package of resources. There are options with different preparation time required to fit your schedule.
- **Restorative practices:** Supportive responses have been shown to be more effective than punitive approaches. As much as possible when responding to suspected use, approach students privately, not in front of peers. When communicating with parents, share observations and offer to share some resources for parents if parents are open to it. If time is limited, referring to a school counsellor or admin for supportive follow-up actions may work better. With vaping, there are a number of ways to implement a restorative practice approach.

Sources:

<https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/e-cigarettes/protecting-youth.html>

<https://www.notanexperiment.ca/parents/>

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/dsa/Page18000.aspx>

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Restorative practices are a set of strategies for building healthy relationships while responding effectively to unacceptable school behaviour. In a nutshell, it's about incorporating responses that support rather than stigmatize in policy enforcement approaches. With vaping, this might involve a tiered or progressive approach that starts with one response action and incrementally includes additional actions for future infractions.

For example: [Click for chart to appear]

- i) A first infraction may involve confiscation of vaping paraphernalia, notifying caregivers and having a meeting with the student to discuss school policy.
- ii) The second may involve confiscation of vaping paraphernalia, having a meeting with the student during which they communicate the violation to their caregiver themselves, and provision of information on vaping and available cessation supports.
- iii) The third may involve the above as well as mandatory completion of an 'alternative to suspension program'. Alternative to suspension programs provide an educational opportunity in lieu of a suspension. They aim to address the root cause (in this case the addiction) and deter future use or violations. Students may also be referred to a community cessation service, if available and appropriate. In Alberta, there is currently no provincial program for alternatives to suspensions for vaping. However, locally, resources found in the Teachers' Vaping Toolkit within the CANVAS resource package, such as the recommended self-led modules, can be used to create a consistent response plan that serves as an alternative to suspension.

Source: <https://www.alberta.ca/restorative-practices>

Source:

<https://legacy.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/School-Leaders/PD-233a%20Alternatives%20to%20Suspension.pdf>

Source:

<https://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/Comm-ercial-Tobacco-Free-K-12-School-Model-Policy-2019.pdf>

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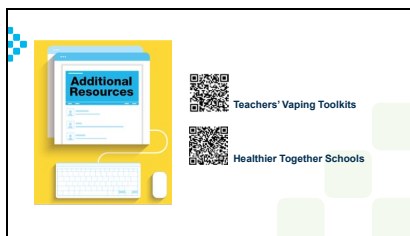
The Lung Health Foundation have created some resources as a part of the Quash program. It is suitable for any educator who has the opportunity to talk to a young person about quitting vaping. The conversation is said to take under 3 minutes, with the toolkit providing guidance on how to approach the conversation.

The NotAnExperiment website has easy-to-access resources for students to learn the facts and prepare them to stop vaping. This resource is especially useful if they don't appear to be ready to quit just yet.

The Quash app is a comprehensive tool that helps teens plan their journey to stop vaping. It prepares them in case they get off-track, and helps them celebrate successes on their journey.

All these resources are listed in your handout, or you can use the QR Code on the slide.

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The links on this slide are specifically for teachers.

- The toolkits are grades-based and contain age-appropriate resources to support teachers in classrooms. These resources can also be tailored for use as alternatives to suspension programs in schools.
- Healthier Together Schools contains a host of general information for schools taking action on vaping such as grants available, or information on reaching a health promotion facilitator in your area.

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Any final questions or thoughts?

Monthly Announcements - Elementary

January **01**

New Year – Welcome back
This year, let's support each other in making smart, healthy choices. Whether it's saying no to peer pressure or helping a friend do the same, small actions can make a big difference.

February **02**

Pink Shirt Day – Last Wednesday of February
What will you do if you're pressured to vape? Think about what you want now so you can handle peer pressure in the future. Having a plan helps you stay in control of your choices.

March **03**

Spring and Earth Day – Apr 22
Spring is the perfect time to take care of ourselves and the planet! Let's enjoy fresh air, move our bodies and say "no thank you" to things that aren't safe for us or the world around us.

April **04**

Canadian Public Health Week
Vaping can make it harder to breathe and isn't safe for growing bodies. The best choice is to stay active, stay informed, and take care of yourself every day!

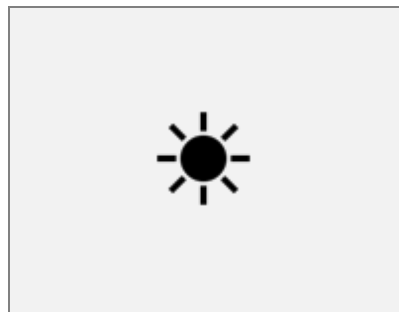
May **05**

Mental Health Week
There are lots of healthy ways to beat stress. Playing sports, chatting with friends, and listening to music are just a few. What helps you relax best?

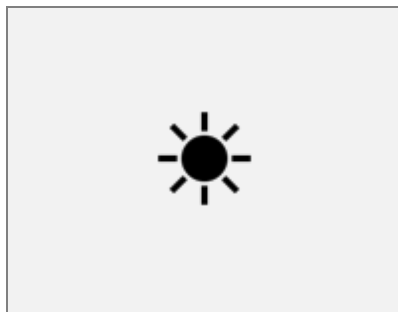
June **06**

National Health & Fitness Day – First Saturday of June
Sports like hockey, dance, soccer, and snowboarding need strong lungs and a healthy heart. Making healthy choices like staying vape-free helps you perform your best!

July **07**



August **08**



September **09**

Back-to-school
A new school year means a fresh start - new goals, new friendships, and new healthy choices. As we get back into routines, let's remember that taking care of ourselves includes making smart decisions about our health, like saying no to vaping.

October **10**

Thanksgiving
Thanksgiving is a perfect time to pause and think about what we're grateful for — like our health. One way we can show thanks for our health is by making choices that protect our body and our future — like saying no to vaping.

November **11**

National Addictions Awareness Week
If something doesn't feel right, or if someone is asking you to do something that makes you uncomfortable, it's always okay to say no — and to talk to a trusted adult like a teacher, parent, or school staff member. You're never alone.

December **12**

Anti-Bullying Day – Dec 17
Surrounding yourself with friends who don't vape makes it easier to stick to your values and avoid peer pressure. Stick with those who support your choices.

Monthly Announcements – Junior High

January **01**

New Year – Welcome back
This year, let's support each other in making smart, healthy choices. Whether it's saying no to peer pressure or helping a friend do the same, small actions can make a big difference.

February **02**

Pink Shirt Day – Last Wednesday of February
What will you do if you're pressured to do something you're not comfortable with? Think about what you want now so you can handle peer pressure in the future. Having a plan helps you stay in control of your choices.

March **03**

Spring and Earth Day – Apr 22
Spring is the perfect time to take care of ourselves and the planet! With Earth Day coming up, it's a great opportunity to think about ways to stay healthy and help the world around us. Let's enjoy fresh air, move our bodies and make healthy choices.

April **04**

Canadian Public Health Week
Making healthy choices includes knowing how to manage stress, make thoughtful decisions, respect others' boundaries, and ask for help when we need it. Knowing that healthy choices affect us as well as those around us, is a big part of growing up and being a positive influence in our school community.

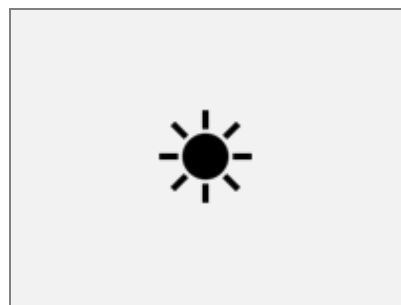
May **05**

Mental Health Week
There are lots of healthy ways to beat stress. Playing sports, chatting with friends, and listening to music are just a few. What helps you relax best?

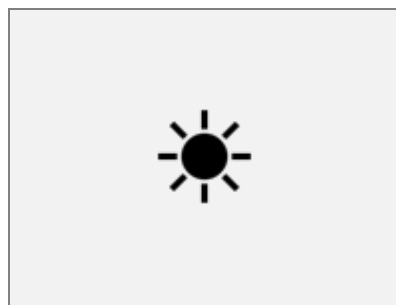
June **06**

National Health & Fitness Day – First Saturday of June
I'm the strongest muscle you have! Your heart. I pump blood to your body and back to your lungs for oxygen. Healthy lungs and a strong heart help you excel in sports and stay active.

July **07**



August **08**



September **09**

Back-to-school
A new school year means a fresh start - new goals, new friendships, and new healthy choices. As we get back into routines, let's remember that taking care of ourselves includes making smart decisions about our health.

October **10**

Thanksgiving
Thanksgiving is a perfect time to pause and think about what we're grateful for — like our health. One way we can show thanks for our health is by making choices that protect our body and our future.

November **11**

National Addictions Awareness Week
If something feels off, talk to a trusted adult — you're never alone. Let's look out for ourselves and each other. Real strength is about being in control of your choices, staying informed, and surrounding yourself with people who support your goals.

December **12**

Anti-Bullying Day – Dec 17
Making healthy choices takes courage, especially when there's pressure to do something that doesn't feel right. Real strength is knowing who you are, standing by your values, and choosing what's best for your body and mind — even when it's not the easy choice.

Monthly Announcements – Senior High

January **01**

New Year – Welcome back
This year, let's choose healthy habits—like getting more sleep, being active, staying hydrated, and avoiding harmful substances like vapes and nicotine. Making the choice to not vape is one of the best things you can do for your body and your future.

February **02**

Pink Shirt Day – Last Wednesday of February
What will you do if you're pressured to vape? Think about what you want now so you can handle peer pressure in the future. Having a plan helps you stay in control of your choices.

March **03**

Spring and Earth Day – Apr 22
Disposable vapes and pods are on the rise, and that trash like empty pods, dead batteries and packaging, is adding up fast. E-cigarette waste causes pollution and is harmful to wildlife. Let's breathe easy this spring with healthy habits, clear minds and caring for our planet.

April **04**

Canadian Public Health Week
Vaping causes dry mouth, leading to bad breath, cavities, and gum disease. Vape aerosol contains over 60 chemicals including addictive nicotine, toxic metals, and harmful particles that can damage your lungs. Vaping isn't as harmless as it seems.

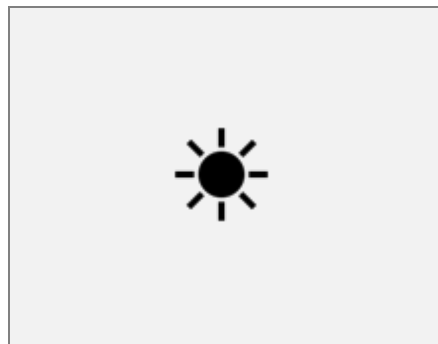
May **05**

Mental Health Week
Vaping companies say e-cigarettes reduce stress; The truth is that nicotine can increase anxiety. Know the facts and talk to a trusted adult for help managing stress.

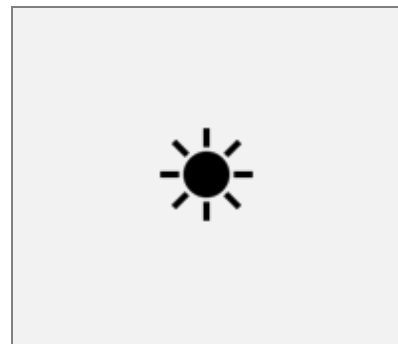
June **06**

End of the School Year
Feeling overwhelmed by school, family, or relationships? You're not alone. Talk to a teacher, friend, counselor, or text Kids Help Phone at 68-68-68—free, 24/7 support for any challenge.

July **07**



August **08**



September **09**

Back-to-school
Nicotine impacts the brain areas responsible for attention and learning, causing memory and mood issues. Using it while your brain is still developing can make it harder to focus and succeed in school. Let's make this school year our healthiest yet. There's always support if you need it.

October **10**

Thanksgiving
Thanksgiving is a perfect time to pause and think about what we're grateful for — like our health. One way we can show thanks for our health is by making choices that protect our body and our future.

November **11**

Addictions Awareness Week
If something feels off or pressured, talk to a trusted adult - you're never alone. Let's look out for ourselves and each other. Real strength is about being in control of your choices, staying informed, and surrounding yourself with people who support your goals.

December **12**

Anti-Bullying Day – Dec 17
Surrounding yourself with friends who don't vape makes it easier to stick to your values and avoid peer pressure. Stick with those who support your choices.

Interactive Activities for Awareness and Engagement

Interactive activities can help engage students in learning about vaping and nicotine in a meaningful way. The resources below include online games and activity ideas that educators can use to support health fairs, classroom learning, or school-wide awareness events.




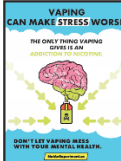
These links from trusted Canadian sources are organized by suggested grade levels and can be adapted to needs and context (especially between Junior High and High School).

Elementary	Junior High	High School
<p>Be Tobacco Smart! Colouring Pages Printable colouring pages for K-3 students that introduce basic concepts about tobacco and health in an age-appropriate, engaging way.</p>	<p>Feeling the Weight? – Interactive Webpage An interactive page that explores ditching the vape and finding alternative ways to help manage stress or anxiety. Tip: Create a “Spot the Strategy” station where students explore the page and recall one way manage stress or pressure, without vapes.</p>	<p>The Cost of Vaping – Interactive Resource Help students explore the financial costs of vaping. It can be used to support awareness of the impacts of vaping beyond health. Tip: Set up a “Cost Calculator” station where students estimate how much vaping could cost over a week, month, or year and compare it to other purchases.</p>
<p>Health Canada In-Class Experience Book a free, facilitator-led virtual program for grades 4-6 featuring interactive activities and live Q&A on vaping, substance use, and peer pressure.</p>	<p>Hidden Dangers – Interactive Learning An interactive image-based resource that allows students to explore the health and environmental risks of vaping by selecting different elements to learn more. Tip: Create an “Explore the Image” station where students interact with a display screen and explore the content.</p>	<p>Facts: Stop Vaping Challenge Information-based webpage that helps students explore key facts about vaping, including health risks, addiction, and how vaping affects the body. Tip: Create a “Myth vs. Fact” station where students use the webpage to decide whether they are true or false.</p>
<p>Pressure Points – Interactive Activity An interactive activity for grades 4-6 that guides students through real-life peer pressure scenarios and explores practical ways to respond in different situations.</p>	<p>Nicotine is Nicotine – Interactive Activity Challenges students to identify which products contain nicotine, helping build awareness of how nicotine can appear in different forms. Tip: Set up a “What Contains Nicotine?” quiz station where students guess which products contain nicotine using this resource.</p>	<p>Behind the Haze Website Alberta-based website that allows students to explore real questions about vaping including risks, ingredients, addiction, and quitting. Tip: Set up a “Ask Your Question” station where students explore the site and choose topics (e.g., <i>Is vaping addictive?</i>), then share one fact or myth learned.</p>

School Posters and Signage

Clear and visible messaging reinforces school expectations and raises awareness about the risks of vaping and nicotine use. The websites below offer free signage, posters, and educational materials that schools can order or download to support prevention efforts and promote healthy choices.

Place signage in high-visibility areas such as entrances, washrooms, hallways, and student gathering spaces to reinforce messaging throughout the school environment.

<p><u>Primary Care Alberta - Printed Resources</u></p> 	<p>Primary Care Alberta’s Tobacco, Vaping and Cannabis Program offers a collection of printed resources such as handouts, booklets, posters/clings, and curriculum supports which can be ordered and sent directly to you at no cost. Access the catalogue using the following information and place an order: Username: tobaccopublic Password: dwcal2012</p>
<p><u>Alberta Health Services - Smoking/Vaping Not Permitted Sign</u></p> 	<p>AHS’ Environmental Public Health team provide a downloadable sign, with clear messaging - used to highlight areas where Alberta’s Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Reduction Act applies.</p>
<p><u>Health Canada - Vaping Resources</u></p> 	<p>Health Canada offer both digital and hard-copy posters, self-help booklets, tip sheets, posters, mirror clings and videos about vaping prevention and cessation.</p>
<p><u>Not An Experiment – School Posters</u></p> 	<p>Not An Experiment, an initiative by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, has a set of printable posters that can be used in schools to promote awareness of the effects of vaping. Note: Poster regarding fine of \$305 does not apply in Alberta.</p>

Community Resources & Services

Community resources and services for vaping prevention utilize the strength of the entire community, including youth, families, schools, organizations, and local systems to shape environments, policies, and social norms that reduce youth vaping.

Below are some readily available resources and services.

<u>School Health Promotion - Support for schools</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides support for schools to enhance overall health and wellness. • Offers resources and guidance for building a comprehensive school health approach.
<u>Mental Health Capacity Building</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports schools with programs aimed at building mental health knowledge and skills. • Includes prevention, early intervention, and promotion of positive mental well-being. • Helps integrate mental health into daily school life and classroom practices.
<u>STOMP - Students Together Moving to Prevent Substance Use</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides teaching tools and resources to help students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Understand risks related to substance use. ○ Build peer leadership and advocacy skills. ○ Promote a supportive school culture around substance-free choices.
<u>CHPS - Community Health Promotion Services</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivers evidence-based substance use prevention and mental health promotion to children, youth and their families/caregivers in Calgary. • Focuses on strengthening protective factors and reducing risk factors linked to substance misuse and mental health disorders
<u>Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Reduction Act – Enforcement Program</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspects tobacco and vaping retailers to ensure compliance • Works with other enforcement agencies to coordinate enforcement activities across Alberta • Responds to public complaints • Use this website to report retailers selling vapes to youth

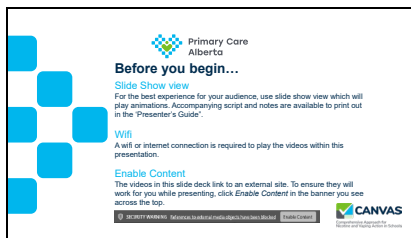
Presentation Guide

IMPORTANT: This guide includes speaker notes and suggested script to support delivery of the CANVAS presentation. To access the accompanying PowerPoint slide deck, go to primarycarealberta.ca/tobaccovapingprevention.

Clearing the Air: What parents need to know about vaping

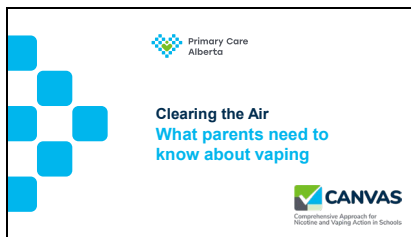


Slide
1



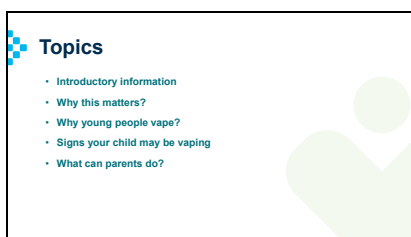
Housekeeping information for the presenter.

Slide
2



Introductions: Name, Role and Topic

Slide
3



Let's run through the topics we will be covering today.

- Introductory information
- Why this matters?
- Why young people vape?
- Signs your child may be vaping
- What can parents do?

We're pleased to share this presentation from Primary Care Alberta (PCA). If any questions arise that we can't fully answer today, we'll reach out to PCA to get the information you need and follow up by email.

Slide
4

What is vaping?

The use of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) or similar devices that heat a liquid into an aerosol (not just "harmless vapour") to be inhaled.

Vaping is the act of inhaling and exhaling an aerosol, often containing nicotine and other chemicals (not just water vapour), produced by an electronic device like an e-cigarette.

VIDEO: Vaping, like many subcultures, has developed its own set of slang terms. This quick video shows some common vaping slang and their meanings.

Click image on slide to play video.

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NOj2NC3YPAY>

Slide
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Primary Care Alberta

What are "vapes"?

E-Cigarettes & Vape Pens Generations

Many of you may already be familiar with e-cigarettes or "vapes" so this is a quick overview.

- You can see here how vapes have changed over the years, beginning on the left with those made to look as much like cigarettes as possible. This was followed by modifications and optimizations to produce products over time that maximized the amount of nicotine absorbed by the consumer. Focus was also placed on design and technologies to promote trends and increase use.
- Vaping products do not contain tobacco or burning or produce smoke. Vaping devices work by heating e-juice to produce an aerosol that's inhaled and absorbed into the bloodstream.
- Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, flavourings and sometimes THC.

Source: <https://med.stanford.edu/tobaccopreventiontoolkit/curriculum-decision-maker/by-module/E-Cigs.html>

If you'd like to read more information to understand the devices, how they work, and what they contain, you can use the **QR Code** to access Health Canada's page on vaping devices. This link is also listed in your handout.

Source: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/smoking-tobacco/vaping.html>

Slide
6

Primary Care Alberta

Why this matters?

Are students smoking or vaping?

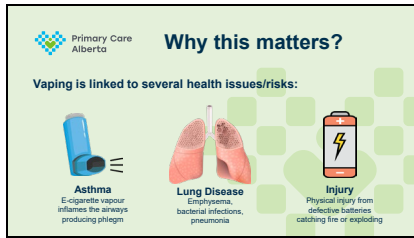
Source: Canadian Student Alcohol and Drugs Survey, 2022-24.

Presenters: Use the notes below to describe the stats in this image. Make it relatable by discussing what you are seeing/experiencing at your school.

In Alberta, for each student who says they are currently smoking (4.3% of students in Grades 7-12 have smoked a cigarette in the past 30-days), there are over 3 times the number of students who say they are currently vaping (15.6% have vaped in the past 30-days).

Source: <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/substance-use/csads/>

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7



Known health issues linked to vaping include:

- Asthma
- Emphysema, lung infections and pneumonia
- Defective batteries have caused fires or explosions leading to injury

Source: <https://behindthehaze.ca/vaping-risks>

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8

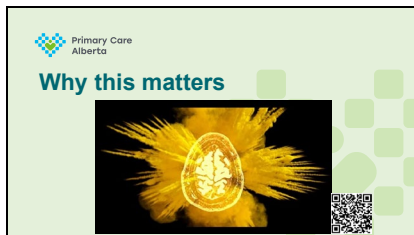


- Most vaping products contain nicotine which is known to have adverse health effects.
- For adolescents especially, nicotine harms brain development which continues up to age 25.
- Nicotine is highly addictive, and youth are particularly vulnerable to this, sometimes showing signs of addiction before they start regular or daily use.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/e-cigarettes/health-effects.html>

Click on the picture on the slide to play the video.

Slide
9

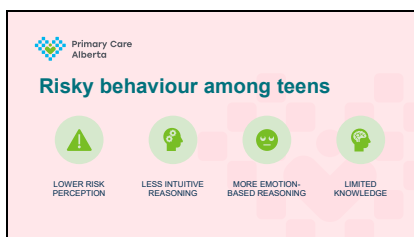


This video provides an overview of nicotine and addiction resulting from vaping. The video is used in schools to inform teens about nicotine and how it works, ultimately leading to addiction. We will now watch the video together. The aim is to gain a basic understanding, similar to what our students will learn. More information like this, geared towards students is available on BehindtheHaze.ca, a website created to help teens understand vaping. The **QR code** for BehindtheHaze is on the screen but also listed in your handout.

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XDYPaEiDUJ0>

While risk-taking is considered normal and developmentally appropriate behavior for youth, we know there is an important difference between healthy and unhealthy risk-taking.

Slide
10



Research shows that adolescents' decision-making around risks differs from adults in a number of ways:

- Lower risk perception: They underestimate risks and may even perceive more potential benefits from their actions. In fact, in a 2021-22 survey of Canadian students, less than half (48%) of students report perceiving a "great risk" of harm from using e-cigarettes with nicotine on a regular basis. 6% of them report perceiving no risk of harm.
- Less intuitive reasoning: They lack the education and experience to decide based on their intuition, whereas adults can engage in this type of "gist-based" reasoning. This often leads to students make

decisions in a different way, as shown in the next point.

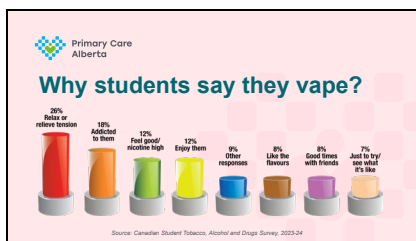
- More emotion-based reasoning: They don't just weigh the risks they think about the social consequences of their decisions. This highlights the need for health education that targets social competencies to equip students with resilience and responsible decision-making skills.
- Limited knowledge: They may have a limited understanding of the possible consequences of their actions. Facilitating students in gaining reliable and accurate information prevention on vaping is an important piece of prevention, and can be done using some of the ready-to-use classroom resources found in the CANVAS package of resources.

Source: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/canadian-student-tobacco-alcohol-drugs-survey/2021-2022-detailed-tables.html>

Source: *National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; Health and Medicine Division; Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education; Board on Children, Youth, and Families; Committee on Applying Lessons of Optimal Adolescent Health to Improve Behavioral Outcomes for Youth; Kahn NF, Graham R, editors. Promoting Positive Adolescent Health Behaviors and Outcomes: Thriving in the 21st Century. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2019 Dec 12. 3. The Current Landscape of Adolescent Risk Behavior. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK554988/>*

The top reason that over a quarter of Alberta students reported as the reason they vape, is to **relieve tension or stress**, and the second highest reason reported, is because they feel hooked on them. Other reasons reported include feeling good or even high when vaping, or generally just enjoying them. 8% of students surveyed even reported it is because they like the flavours.

Slide 11



Within the blue bar in the chart, 9% of students gave a range of other responses including reasons such as peer pressure and using them instead of smoking cigarettes or to quit cigarettes.

Presenters: An optional interactive question on “Were you surprised by these results? What was surprising?” can be asked here to spark discussion.

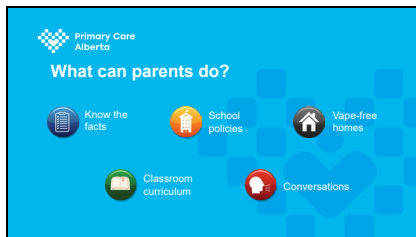
Source: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/canadian-student-tobacco-alcohol-drugs-survey/2021-2022-detailed-tables.html>

Slide 12

Signs your teen might be vaping

- Unusual smells on clothes or breath (fruity, minty)
- Becomes more thirsty
- Changes in sleep patterns or mood (irritable, anxious)
- Frequent bathroom breaks
- Secretive behaviour (protective of phones/pockets, excuses to leave)
- Having frequent nosebleeds

Slide
13

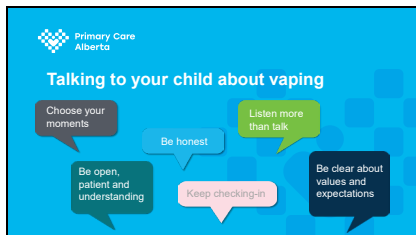


- **Know the facts:** Get credible information from reliable sources such as those in your handout. Avoid scare tactics or exaggerating the negatives. Acknowledging both the benefits and harm of substance use can help you to have a more balanced perspective when talking with children and teens. If there is something you don't know, find the answer together.
- **Vape-free homes:** A vape-free home can ensure your child is not exposed to secondhand aerosol from vapes while setting a good example for youth.
- **School policies:** Do your best to become familiar with your child's school vaping policies, including the consequences for policy violations by students.
- **Classroom curriculum:** Talk to teachers or school administrators about any vaping prevention curriculum in the classroom. It is a good idea to be familiar with what your children and teens will learn and continue those conversations at home.
- **Conversations:** It's never too early or too late to start these conversations. Many small conversations over time are better than one big one. Discussing vaping regularly is a good idea as it will help your child avoid misinformation and learn your family values and expectations.

Sources:

<https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/e-cigarettes/protecting-youth.html>
<https://www.notanexperiment.ca/parents/>
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/dsa/Page18000.aspx>

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Choose your moments – look for natural opportunities to start the conversation. For example, you might ask them what they think about something you see together such as vape ads, a vape store, or someone vaping.

Be open, patient and understanding – Try to prepare yourself for what you might hear. Do your best to be non-judgemental and avoid criticism.

Be honest – Share your knowledge as you understand it. If there is something you don't know, learn with your child together. It is ok not to be the expert. Your guidance to reliable sources of information is just as valuable. Read about it together or suggest chatting with your healthcare provider about it.

Listen more than talking – the goal is to have a conversation rather than to provide all the information you have. Ask open-ended questions.

Keep checking-in – Over time, children and teens mature, pressures change, they experience new things. This makes it important to keep the conversation going.

Be clear about your values and expectations - It is important that they know your values and what is expected of them. If the conversation steers towards questions about your experiences, the TalkTips resource in your handout will lead you to useful information on sharing your experiences surrounding substance use.

Sources:
<https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/e-cigarettes/protecting-youth.html>
<https://www.notanexperiment.ca/parents/>
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/dsa/Page18000.aspx>

Slide
15



The Lung Health Foundation have created some resources as a part of the Quash program. It is suitable for any educator who has the opportunity to talk to a young person about quitting vaping. The conversation is said to take under 3 minutes, with the toolkit providing guidance on how to approach the conversation.

The NotAnExperiment website has easy-to-access resources for students to learn the facts and prepare them to stop vaping. This resource is especially useful if they don't appear to be ready to quit just yet.

The Quash app is a comprehensive tool that helps teens plan their journey to stop vaping. It prepares them in case they get off-track, and helps them celebrate successes on their journey.

All these resources are listed in your handout, or you can use the QR Code on the slide.

Slide
16



The links on this slide are specifically for teachers.

- The toolkits are grades-based and contain age-appropriate resources to support teachers in classrooms. These resources can also be tailored for use as alternatives to suspension programs in schools.
- Healthier Together Schools contains a host of general information for schools taking action on vaping such as grants available, or information on reaching a health promotion facilitator in your area.

Slide
17



Any final questions or thoughts?

CLEARING THE AIR: What parents need to know about vaping

Learn more
about vape
devices



**Health Canada:
About Vaping**

Learn about
vaping (for
youth)



**Behind the
Haze: Alberta**



Talking to
youth about
vaping



**Not an
Experiment**



**Health Canada:
Tip Sheet**



**PCA: Talk Tips
Webpage**

Supporting
youth to quit
vaping



**Quash:
Conversations**



**Smoke Free
Teen**



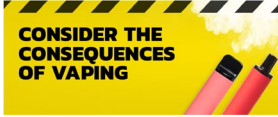





**Quash: Quitting
App**

Quitting Support for Youth

Quitting vaping can be challenging, and some students may benefit from additional support. The resources below include trusted websites, apps, and helplines designed to help youth reduce or quit nicotine use. School staff can use these tools to refer students to appropriate support when needed.

These resources can be shared directly with students or used to support conversations about quitting.

<p>Quash App</p>  <p>Powered by LUNG HEALTH FOUNDATION</p>	<p>Quash is an app that educators can share with students to support quitting vaping or smoking. It helps students plan their quit journey, prepare for challenges, and track progress over time.</p>
<p>Stop Vaping Challenge</p> 	<p>The Stop Vaping Challenge app can be shared with students who may benefit from a peer-supported approach to quitting. It allows students to set goals, track cravings and moods, and stay motivated by connecting with friends who are working toward similar goals.</p>
<p>Consider the Consequences of Vaping</p> 	<p>This resource can be shared with students to support informed decision-making about vaping and nicotine use. It provides trusted information and clear answers to common questions about the potential health impacts of vaping.</p>
<p>Crush the Crave – Vape Edition App Store (Apple)</p> 	<p>This app can be shared with students who are interested in quitting vaping. It provides tools to help students track their progress, understand their vaping patterns, and stay motivated by monitoring milestones such as vape-free days and money saved.</p>
<p>SmokeFree Teen - Make Your Quit Plan</p> 	<p>This resource can be shared with students who are preparing to quit vaping or are currently trying to quit. It provides a step-by-step quit planning tool, including identifying reasons, setting a quit date and developing strategies to manage triggers. This resource is based in the United States and may refer students to supports (e.g. helplines) that are not available in Canada so it is best used in combination with other resources in this list.</p>
<p>Kids Help Phone</p> 	<p>This resource can be shared with students who may be using vaping to cope with stress, anxiety, or other challenges. It connects students to free, confidential support through Kids Help Phone, including phone, text, and online counselling services.</p>

Vaping policy cheat sheet

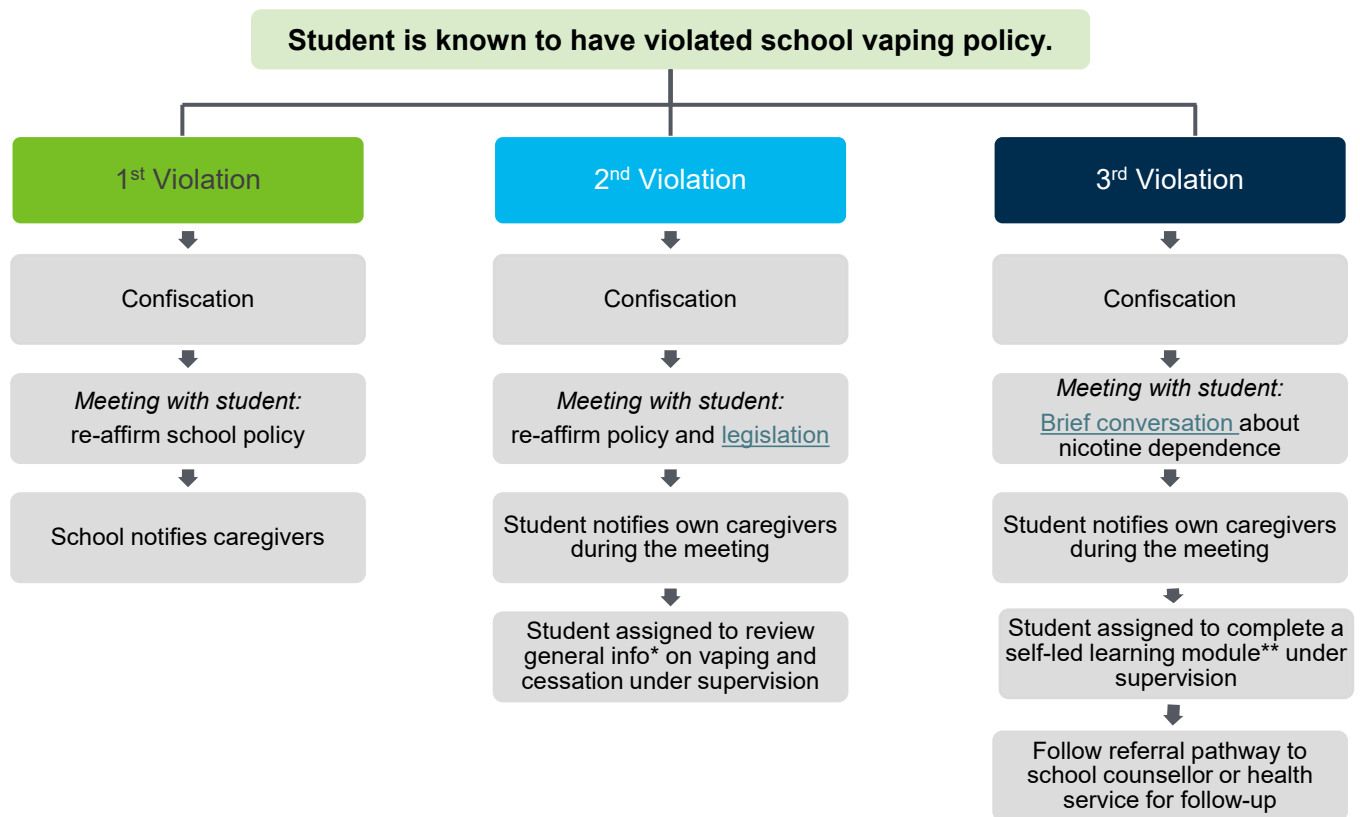
Alberta legislation – what schools need to know

The Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Reduction Act (TSVRA) and aims to reduce the health harms associated with smoking and second-hand smoke and address the rise in youth vaping. It is important for schools to note that under the TSVRA:

- no person shall smoke or vape on a *school property*, including the building, grounds and parking areas used in relation to the school property.
- “minor” means a person who is under 18 years of age.
- no minor shall possess or consume a tobacco product or vaping product or smoke or vape either on school property or in a vehicle that is on school property.
- a minor who violates the above law is guilty of an offence and liable to a fine of \$100.
- no person shall provide or offer a tobacco product or vaping product to a minor on school property. This is subject to a fine of up to \$10,000 for a first offence.
- a sign prohibiting smoking and vaping must be posted at each entrance and inside each public place

Policy violation response procedure

Prioritize student well-being and a safe, respectful school community. Respond to vaping incidents with consistency, accountability, and support for positive change. Below is an example of an incremental response to violations with a focus on restorative practices.



Policy response preparedness checklist

Before implementing a response to vaping violations, schools should establish a clear and consistent approach. This includes identifying roles and responsibilities and pre-selecting appropriate educational and restorative learning resources.

Roles and responsibilities

- Who confiscates vaping devices?
- Who escorts the student (if needed)?
- Who conducts the meetings?
- Who supervises the learning task?
- Who manages documentation and record-keeping?
- Who follows-up re: nicotine dependence?

Learning resources

- *General information for students (2nd violation)
 - BehindtheHaze.ca
 - NotAnExperiment.ca
- **Self-led learning modules (3rd violation)
 - [What the Vape?! \(Gr 4-6\)](#)
 - [Consider the Consequences \(Gr 7-12\)](#)