



# Vaping to Quit Smoking

A 5-step guide for hospital patients with smoking-related conditions to quit through vaping



# About this guide

More than half a million adult hospital admissions were due to smoking in 2019-20, some 10% higher than a decade earlier (*Office of National Statistics*). This 5-step guide has been designed to successfully support smokers looking to quit smoking by switching to vaping.

Published by the UK Vaping Industry Association (UKVIA), the vaping sector's largest sector body, this guide draws on the unparalleled knowledge and experience of its retail members whose expert advice has been instrumental in circa 2m former smokers in the UK, who have successfully switched from combustible to electronic cigarettes over the last decade.

Public Health England (PHE) continues to evidence that vaping is substantially less harmful than smoking and vaping is now widely acknowledged as one of the most effective ways to quit combustible tobacco. <sup>[1]</sup>

Every smoker is different, and therefore it's critical that you get the right support you need on your own smoke-free journey.

More copies of this Guide and other information on vaping can be downloaded from [www.ukvia.co.uk/healthcarehub](http://www.ukvia.co.uk/healthcarehub)



Public Health  
England

"For anyone who smokes, particularly those who have already tried other methods, we strongly recommend they try vaping and stop smoking – ideally with additional support from their local stop smoking service for the very best chance of quitting for good."

– Professor John Newton, Director of Health Improvement at Public Health England, 2021

<sup>[1]</sup> A Randomized Trial of E-Cigarettes versus Nicotine-Replacement Therapy, Peter Hajek et. al., 2019, [[Link](#)]

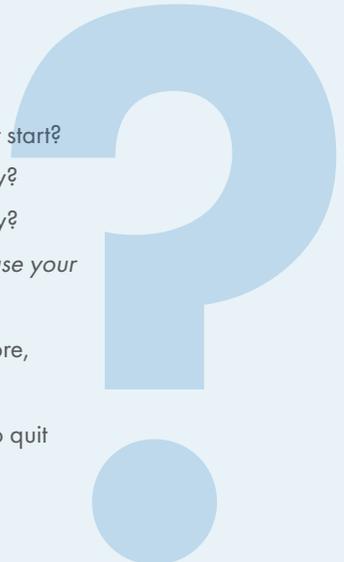
# 1. Understanding your smoking habits

Understanding your smoking habits, lifestyle choices and health goals is essential information for health professionals and stop-smoking and vape specialists to give you customised advice on the best course of action to quit smoking. This includes the types of vape devices, flavours and nicotine strengths, as well as other quitting methods to potentially use alongside vaping.



## Questions you may be asked:

- How long have you been smoking and when did you first start?
- On average, how many cigarettes do you smoke in a day?
- When do you normally first start smoking on a typical day?
- Do you drink alcohol and how often? (*Alcohol will increase your craving to smoke*)
- If you have gone back to smoking after trying to quit before, what's the reason behind this?
- What are the reasons you want to quit and is your goal to quit tobacco or both tobacco and nicotine?



## 2. Types of vape devices that are best for you

Below is a list of the different e-cigarette models available.

Healthcare professionals, stop smoking services and vape retail specialists will be able to advise you on these devices, drawing on your lifestyle information, medical records and existing tobacco consumption.

Seeking advice on the right type of vape device is critical. It's important to ensure your choice of device is easy to use, satisfies your nicotine craving and fits in with your daily routine.

### Disposables



- Lower start-up cost option
- Lower cost option
- User-friendly
- Mirror conventional cigarette experience
- Limited battery life
- Non-refillable
- Disposable or rechargeable

### Pods



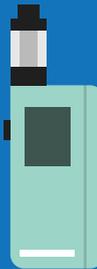
- Lower start-up cost option
- Lower cost option
- User-friendly
- Mirror conventional cigarette experience
- Pre-filled pod inserts
- Refillable or non-refillable
- Rechargeable

### Vape pens



- Varied battery life
- Refillable with different e-liquid strengths & flavours
- Popular amongst first time vapers
- Rechargeable
- Mirror conventional cigarette experience

### Mods

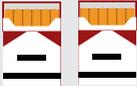


- Long battery life
- Can be customised to allow for changes in power and airflow
- Suitable for more experienced vapers
- Refillable
- Varied power for nicotine delivery

# 3. Know what nicotine levels are right for you

As with e-cigarette devices, advice on the right type of level of nicotine concentration is critical. It is important to ensure that your nicotine intake closely mirrors the same levels as when smoking.

The required nicotine strength level in vape devices will largely depend on your smoking frequency but will also be shaped by your goals and whether you want to quit tobacco or quit tobacco and nicotine. The chart below provides a standard framework of advice on typical nicotine concentrations for smokers transitioning over to vaping.

Type of smoker	Cigarettes smoked	Recommended nicotine concentration
 Heavy smoker	More than a full packet per day	 20mg
 Average smoker	Up to 20 cigarettes per day	 6-12mg
 Light smoker	Less than 10 cigarettes per day	 3-6mg
 Social smoker	One or two a week	 3mg
For those seeking to quit smoking and nicotine, non-nicotine containing e-liquids are also available (0mg)		

## 4. Know your flavour options

Flavours play a key role in supporting smokers to quit and stay quit. All vapers who have switched from smoking are different and you should be open to trying different flavours. This is part of your quitting journey.

Smokers who move over initially try and replicate the cigarette experience in terms of taste, so generally they will look at starting on a tobacco or menthol product. As they migrate to a more powerful device they also experiment with other flavours.

**According to Action on Smoking & Health, in 2021 the most popular flavours were:**



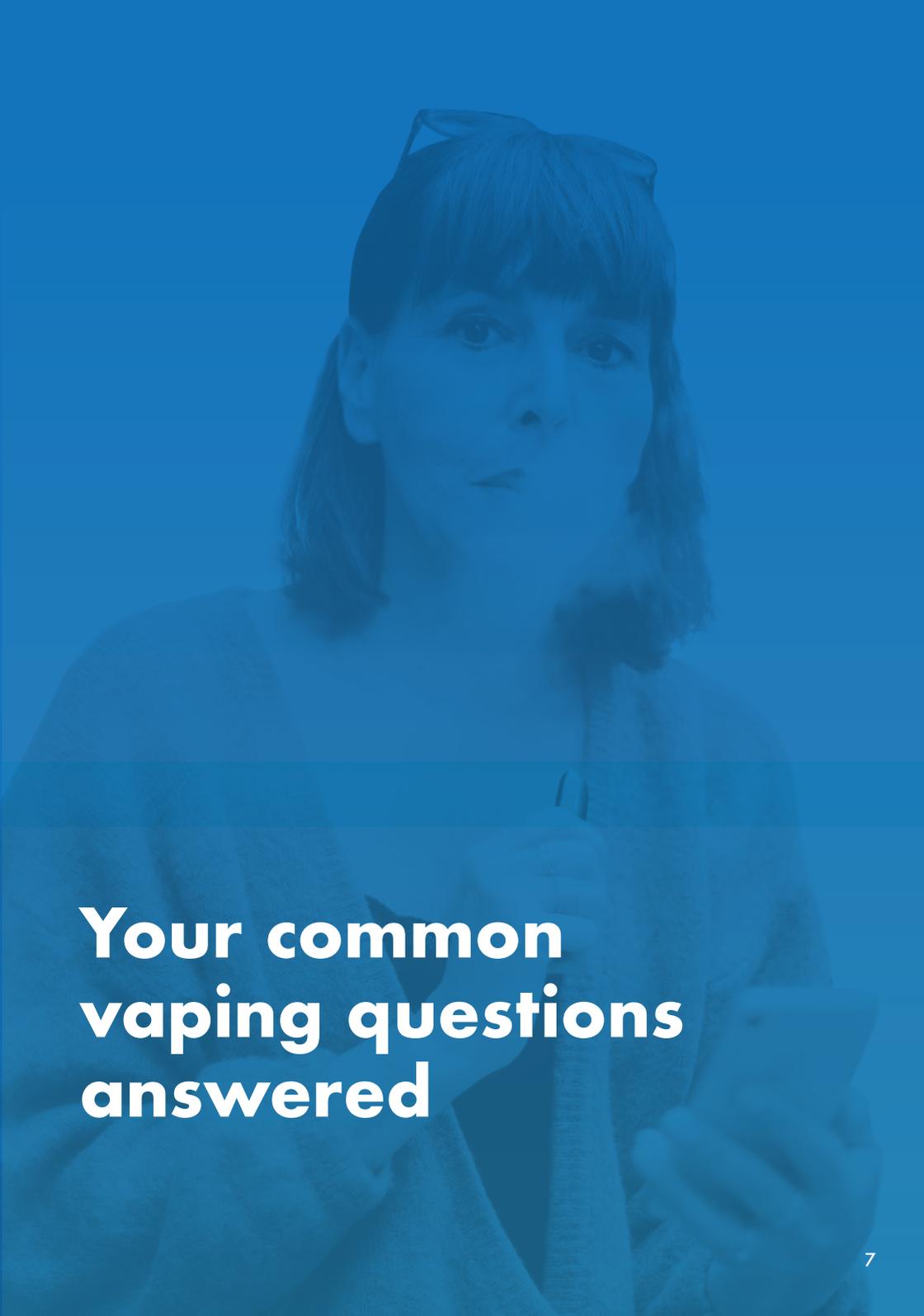
## 5. Remember every cigarette not smoked is a win

Don't worry if you don't feel that you are making as good progress with quitting smoking through vaping as you'd hoped for. Everyone is different and it doesn't happen overnight. Don't be tempted to give up vaping if your body has an initial reaction such as craving for more nicotine or experiencing headaches. It might be as simple as needing to tweak the nicotine concentration up or down.

**Just knock out one cigarette at a time and take as long as it takes – it's not a race to the end.**

We know stopping smoking isn't easy. The key to success is being ready to make the change. If you're already unwell with an illness that smoking makes worse, this might be the right time.

Planning is key. Using the right products (it may be an e-cigarette, or a combination of vaping and nicotine replacement, such as a patch) and getting regular support (digital via the Smoke Free app or face to face via your local Stop Smoking Service or vape store specialist) makes all the difference. The Smoke Free app has heaps of support to keep you on track.



# **Your common vaping questions answered**

## **Q: Is vaping safe?**

**A:** Vaping is a heavily regulated industry in the UK, and that should provide utmost confidence to those looking to quit combustible tobacco, so long as they purchase products that meet the highest safety standards. Vaping devices sold in the UK have to pass stringent tests both to be safe and approved for use in the UK. This is managed by the independent Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency.

E-cigarettes do not burn tobacco leaves but use electronic heat sources to aerosolise an e-liquid that is then inhaled by the user. This provides nicotine without burning tobacco, thus significantly reducing exposure to the harmful chemicals found in tobacco smoke. E-cigarettes do not produce tar or carbon monoxide, two of the most damaging elements in tobacco smoke.

Like most things in life there is an element of risk in vaping but a growing body of evidence shows that it is considerably less harmful than smoking. PHE say that vaping is at least 95% less harmful than smoking<sup>[2]</sup> and Cancer Research UK have found that second-hand vapour does not harm those around you<sup>[3]</sup>. PHE says there is no situation where it would be better for your health to continue smoking rather than switching completely to vaping.

## **Q: Is the nicotine liquid harmful in an e-cigarette?**

**A:** Cigarette smoke contains thousands of distinct constituents, many of which are toxic or carcinogenic. It is these toxic by-products of combustion, not the nicotine, that are responsible for smoking-related death and disease.

E-cigarettes do not burn tobacco leaves but use electronic heat sources to aerosolise a nicotine-containing liquid that is then inhaled by the user. This provides nicotine without burning tobacco, thus significantly reducing exposure to the harmful chemicals found in tobacco smoke.<sup>[4]</sup>

## **Q: Can I use other quit methods alongside vaping?**

**A:** Yes, there are other quit methods such as gum, patches, heat not burn and nicotine replacement therapies that people use alongside vaping successfully. Individuals will need to determine what's the best combination for them. However, vaping is now widely recognised as the most successful tool to quit smoking and consistently studies show it to be much more effective than NRTs.<sup>[5]</sup>

## **Q: Where should I buy my vaping products from?**

A: We would recommend devices and e-liquids are purchased from retail members of trade associations, such as the UK Vaping Industry Association, as they have to abide by a strict [Code of Conduct](#) which requires them to sell products which adhere to fully compliant levels of product quality, manufacturing and safety standards.

## **Q: What things do I need to be aware of when I start vaping?**

A: Using an e-cigarette provides a similar experience and closely mimics smoking but there are of course differences that a new user will notice.

- Someone new to vaping may find that they cough a little until they adjust to inhaling a vapour rather than the smoke they have been used to. They may also notice a slight difference in nicotine delivery to the body.
- Often a new vaper might inhale too hard and draw the liquid into the coil more quickly than the coil can vaporise which can result in flooding of the tank and sometimes spitting from the over wicked coil.
- An e-liquid will not taste the same as their preferred brand of cigarette and it can take time for their palette to adjust.
- When using an e-cigarette, habits will change. As an example, when you light a cigarette, you tend to smoke it in a single sitting whereas vapers tend to graze and adjust their intake based on their body's requirement for nicotine.

## **Q: I've heard bad things about vaping, should I be worried?**

A: Two years ago in the US there was an outbreak of serious lung injuries which were reportedly caused by vaping. However US authorities identified that vitamin E acetate, added to cannabis products, were the "primary cause" of the outbreak. Vitamin E acetate is banned from UK regulated nicotine-containing e-cigarettes. To date there have been no conclusively confirmed deaths in the UK from vaping legal products.

[2] PHE, 2015 E-cigarette Evidence Review, [\[Link\]](#)

[3] University of East Anglia, Starter vape packs to be handed out in hospitals, [\[Link\]](#)

[4] Cancer Research UK, 2021, [\[Link\]](#)

[5] A Randomized Trial of E-Cigarettes versus Nicotine-Replacement Therapy, Peter Hajek et. al., 2019, [\[Link\]](#)

## Q: What is the cost of vaping versus smoking?

**A:** This is an area of misperception amongst smokers, with many believing that vaping is at least the same cost or more expensive than smoking tobacco. Look at the chart below on typical costs of smoking versus vaping – whilst it depends on how much you smoke and vape, it is clear that vaping presents a financial benefit as much as it does a health one for smokers looking to make the switch.

Cost of cigarettes	
20-a-day	£4,179
10-a-day	£2,089
5-a-day	£1,045

Cost of vaping	
Good starter kit (£25 x 2 in a year)	£50 per year
Replacement coils (£3.50 every 2 weeks)	£84 per year
10ml e-liquids (x4 per month @ £5 each)	£240 per year