



Frequently Asked Questions about Electronic Cigarettes

This information answers frequently asked questions about electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes).

What are e-cigarettes?

Electronic cigarettes, or e-cigarettes, are battery-operated devices that heat a liquid containing nicotine and flavorings. A vapor or mist is created, which is then inhaled.

Are e-cigarettes safe to use?

We don't yet know what health risks are associated with using e-cigarettes. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and other leading public health organizations agree that more research studies are needed. The FDA is seeking authority to regulate e-cigarettes, but at this time, the devices are not regulated in the United States.

One study has found that the vapors in e-cigarettes are not only made up of water, but also contain chemicals that can cause respiratory problems in some users.

Another concern is that some e-cigarettes are not manufactured with good quality control systems.

There has also been an increase in reports of people being poisoned after swallowing, inhaling, or exposing eyes and skin to the liquid used in e-cigarettes, especially in children ages 5 and under.

Can e-cigarettes help people quit smoking?

We don't yet know whether e-cigarettes help or hinder smokers trying to quit. At MSK, we examined the use of e-cigarettes among cancer patients seeking treatment for tobacco dependence and found no evidence that using e-cigarettes improved success in quitting smoking. Some smokers are using the e-cigarette to help manage nicotine withdrawal cravings, reduce their exposure to harmful chemicals in regular cigarette smoke, cut down or quit smoking, or prevent smoking relapse.

Although some current smokers will reduce their use of regular cigarettes if they use e-cigarettes, they may be less likely to quit smoking altogether. For example, people who use both e-cigarettes and smoke regular cigarettes may become more dependent on nicotine and delay quitting. Former smokers may return to smoking by using e-cigarettes.

Are people allowed to use e-cigarettes while at MSK?

No. The e-cigarette is prohibited in all MSK facilities.

What can I do if I want to quit?

There are many resources available to help you quit smoking, including medications and counseling. If you want to quit smoking and need help, call the MSK Tobacco Treatment Program at 212-610-0507 or go to: www.mskcc.org/cancer-care/counseling-support/tobacco-treatment

Resources

American Cancer Society (ACS)

1-800-227-2345

www.cancer.org/cancer/cancercauses/tobaccocancer/questionsaboutsmokingtobaccoandhealth/questions-about-smoking-tobacco-and-health-e-cigarettes

American Legacy Foundation

www.legacyforhealth.org/content/download/582/6926/version/5/file/LEG-FactSheet-eCigarettes-JUNE2013.pdf

National Cancer Institute (NCI)

1-877-448-7848

www.smokefree.gov

OnCancer: News and Insights from Memorial Sloan Kettering

www.mskcc.org/blog/are-electronic-cigarettes-safer-use-conventional-cigarettes

If you have any questions or concerns, talk with a member of your healthcare team. You can reach them Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM at _____. After 5:00 PM, during the weekend, and on holidays, please call _____. If there's no number listed, or you're not sure, call 212-639-2000.

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