

E Cigarettes also known as electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS).

What are e-cigarettes? Electronic cigarettes, (e-cigs) or ENDS (electronic nicotine delivery systems) are devices whose function is to vaporize and deliver to the lungs of the user a chemical mixture typically composed of nicotine, propylene glycol and other chemicals, although some products claim to contain no nicotine. Unlike cigarettes, there is no combustion (burning) involved in ENDS so there is no smoke and no other harmful products of combustion, such as tar and carbon monoxide. This doesn't mean they are entirely safe but they are less harmful than smoking as they don't contain the tar, carbon monoxide, and other products that cause many smoking related illnesses.



Most ENDS are shaped to look like their conventional (tobacco) counterparts (e.g. cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos, pipes, hookahs or shishas). They are also sometimes made to look like everyday items such as pens and USB memory sticks, for people who wish to use the product without other people noticing.

Some products are currently being marketed as **e-shisha**. E-shisha products, like e-cigarettes, consist of devices that vaporise liquid containing different types of chemical flavourings and a solvent. E-shisha are normally described as nicotine free. However, the e-liquid or 'e-juice', which is normally sold separately from the device, may or may not contain nicotine. Like e-cigarettes they are available in a range of nicotine concentrations, either rechargeable or disposable, and with a range of flavours. There is therefore no meaningful distinction between e-shisha products and e-cigarettes, other than marketing.

There has been a rapid increase in the use, availability and promotion of ENDS. There is potential for ENDS to reduce the harm of smoking if smokers of combustible tobacco switch to these devices and research into this is ongoing.

Why is there concern about ENDS and young people?

Nicotine is the addictive ingredient in a cigarette and is often present in ENDS. The amount of nicotine contained in e-cigarettes can vary between and within brands, from nicotine-free products through to high doses of nicotine.

The presentation of e-cigarettes as a “safe” way to smoke may provide a route to nicotine addiction for children and young people.

The appearance of some ENDS mimics smoking a cigarette and could play a role in normalising smoking behaviour. Considerable strides have been made in de-normalising smoking but there is much more to do.

There are also concerns about the effects of e-cigarette marketing on young people. Some marketing of these products appears to have been aimed at a younger adult demographic and maybe also appealing to young people. A number of ENDS are offered in flavours and colours that can be particularly attractive to adolescents.

E-cigarettes and the law

On 1 October 2015 it became illegal in Wales and England:

- **for retailers to sell electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) or e-liquids to anyone under 18, and**
- **for adults to buy (or try to buy) tobacco products or e-cigarettes for anyone under 18. This is known as a proxy purchase.**

If found guilty of an offence of selling nicotine products (tobacco or e-cig) to a child or young person under 18 years of age in a Magistrates' Court, an individual could face a fine of up to £2,500. A person or a business found to be repeatedly selling nicotine inhaling products to people under the age of 18 could receive a Restricted Sales Order or a Restricted Premises Order from the court. This prohibits a named individual, or a named retail outlet, from selling nicotine inhaling products or tobacco to anyone for a period of up to one year.

A proxy purchasing offence is committed when someone over the age of 18 purchases, or attempts to purchase, tobacco or a nicotine product (such as an e-cigarette) on behalf of a child or young person under 18 years of age. Trading Standards Officers can issue fixed penalty notices and fines for proxy purchasing. Failure to pay a fine may result in the matter being pursued in court.

From 20th May 2016 new regulations dictate that e-cigarettes will either be licensed as medicines or, if unlicensed, will be subject to new quality and safety standards, packaging and labelling requirements, and restrictions on advertising. All legitimate

e-cigarette products, including e-liquids should feature the following warning on their label: "This product contains nicotine which is a highly addictive substance"

The UK Committee of Advertising Practice and the Broadcast Committee of Advertising Practice (2014) launched a new code to ensure that e-cigarettes are promoted responsibly. The rules are enforced by the Advertising Standards Authority. The CAP/BCAP rules require that END's adverts should not target children.

E-cigarettes on school site

Based on the current evidence available Public Health Wales advises the following:

- Ensure school smoke free policies clearly also prohibit the use of e-cigarettes and ENDS onsite including by pupils, staff and visitors
- Ensure pupils, staff and visitors are aware of the changes to school policy regarding use of e-cigarettes on site
- Ensure pupils and staff who wish to quit smoking are signposted to NHS stop smoking services via www.stopsmokingwales.com
- or telephone 0800 085 2219
- Pupils should be educated about e-cigarettes within the curriculum alongside other drug education

Advice for parents

If a young person wishes to quit smoking, free support and treatment is available from the NHS. This support is available from Stop Smoking Wales, GP Practices and some Pharmacies.

Children under the age of 18 should not use e-cigarettes to quit smoking. Young people should be encouraged to access behavioural supportⁱ to quit smoking from an NHS service. Those over the age of 12 may use licensed Nicotine Replacement Therapy (patches etc) alongside behavioural support where there is evidence of addiction to nicotine. It should only to be used as part of a supervised regime with behavioural support from a trained health professional. (NICE Guidance 2011)

E-cigarettes and e-liquids/juice should be kept away from children, as should all products containing nicotine. Nicotine is highly poisonous to children and even a small amount can have immediate adverse health effects, especially if consumed incorrectly or in a large volume.

Symptoms of nicotine poisoning may include one or more of the following:

- Burning in the mouth and throat
- Stomach pains, sickness and / or diarrhoea
- Headaches, dizziness and / or confusion
- Sweating and excessive saliva in the mouth
- In severe cases – seizures (fits) and coma

Seek medical advice immediately if you suspect a child has indigested any type of nicotine product.

Useful contacts

Stop Smoking Wales

Telephone: 0800 085 2219 **website** www.stopsmokingwales.com

ASH Wales the **Filter** offers information and advice to young people about smoking.

Email: thefilter@ashwales.org.uk **Website** www.thefilterwales.org

Sources of further information

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<http://bma.org.uk/working-for-change/improving-and-protecting-health/tobacco/e-cigarettes>.
7. ASH. ASH Briefing Electronic Cigarettes. *ASH*. [Online] June 2013. [Cited: 8 October 2013.]
http://www.ash.org.uk/files/documents/ASH_715.pdf.

¹ Behaviour Support - Involves scheduled face-to-face meetings between someone who smokes and a practitioner from the smoking cessation service trained in smoking cessation. Typically, it involves about 6 short weekly sessions.