



VAPING & ORAL HEALTH

Prashanta Patel BDS, MPH, FICOI (UCSF Dental
Public Health)
Tuolumne County Local Oral Health Program

Electronic cigarettes (E-cigarettes) were introduced in the U.S. market around 2007 and are widely known as “e-cigs”, “e-hookahs”, “mods”, and “vape pens”. Initially marketed as ‘longer lasting cigarettes’, overtime they have evolved into an alternative to traditional cigarettes. While most e-cigarettes include nicotine, additional additives such as flavorings and aromas have made e-cigarettes widely popular. Vaping, or the act of inhaling and exhaling the aerosol, often referred to as vapor, which is produced by an e-cigarette or similar device, has risen in popularity with younger populations since its introduction. It is no secret that smoking has adverse effects to health. However, most users are not fully aware of the adverse health consequences of using e-cigarettes.

ADVERSE EFFECTS OF VAPING

Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, an addictive substance, which can impair brain development and lead to behavioral changes. Although research is still limited, recent studies by the American Dental Association (ADA) Foundation found a direct correlation between the use of sweet, flavored e-cigs and the risk of developing dental cavities. Additionally, nicotine has been found to reduce blood flow, restricting the supply of nutrients and oxygen to the soft tissues of the mouth which can lead to receding of the gum line and periodontal issues.

BY THE NUMBERS

- 1 in 4 high school students report being current users of tobacco products
- The number of students who report using e-cigarettes increased from 1.5% in 2011 to 20.8% in 2018
- In 2020, 19.6% of high school students and 4.7% of middle school students reported being current e-cigarette users

For questions about oral health or tobacco cessation contact the Tuolumne County Public Health Department at 209-533-7401