



My Teen is Vaping, Now What?!

Tips for Parents and Caregivers

Finding out your teen might be vaping can bring up a lot of emotions—anger, fear, sadness, disappointment, or worry. It's natural to feel this way, and how you respond can shut down or open up an important conversation.

Use the tips below to help prepare yourself to talk to your teen about vaping and quitting.

THESE TIPS CAN BE APPLIED TO CONVERSATIONS ABOUT OTHER SENSITIVE TOPICS TOO

STEP 1: **KEEP CALM**

- Take time to process your feelings before talking with your teen.
- Staying calm will lead to a better discussion.
- Focus on facts, not assumptions.
- Commit to learning their point of view.

STEP 2: **CREATE A SAFE SPACE**

- Choose a comfortable, private setting where your teen feels at ease.
- Lead with compassion by seeking to learn about and understand your teen's experience with vaping.
- Support by listening and responding with empathy.

STEP 3: **TALK TO YOUR TEEN**

- Begin with a gentle, open-ended question to create a safe and non-judgmental space. **See 'Brief Conversations: Quick Reference' on page 3*
- Listen more than you speak and resist the urge to interrupt or lecture.

STEP 4: **KEEP TALKING**

- Check in regularly, let them know you're there for them.
- If they slip up, provide encouragement and offer support to get back on track. **Refer to the **Tips for Slips**.*

REMEMBER

- If you smoke or vape, you can still support your teen in quitting. Your experiences can help you connect.
- Although vaping may be less harmful than smoking for adults who smoke, there are serious risks for youth.

You can learn more about vaping at:

- **Not an Experiment** (*website*)
- **Hey Parents, Let's Talk About Vaping** (*video*)
- **Brief Conversations Toolkit** (*tools to support quitting*)

**It is important to talk about vaping with your teen.
Although you may not approve of their use, you can be a steady,
caring influence ready to talk and provide support with love and understanding.**



Brief Conversations in Action!

You just found out your teen has been vaping. Whether you got a call from the school principal, or found a vape in their belongings, the reality has hit you hard. You have so many feelings right now....it's a lot. It may feel overwhelming.

Take time to process your thoughts and feelings

You know you need to talk to your teen about it, but right now would definitely not be the right time. You're too upset and need some time to collect your thoughts, because most of all, you want to help your teen move away from vaping.

Choose a safe space to talk

Okay, you took the time you need and are able to think more clearly now. You're ready to talk but know you have to choose a time and place where you will both feel comfortable and there will be no distractions.

Have 'the talk'

Use the Brief Conversations strategy to guide your conversation. See an example below.

- Parent:** Hey, I think we need to talk. A vape fell out of your bag when I moved it yesterday. Can you tell me about that?
- Teen:** Oh, uh... it's just a vape. It's no big deal.
- Parent:** I see. What made you decide to try it?
- Teen:** I don't know... Everyone at school is doing it, and I just thought I'd try. It's not like I'm addicted or anything.
- Parent:** It sounds like a lot of teens are vaping. What do you like about it?
- Teen:** I dunno. I guess it's just something to do with my friends, and it seems pretty harmless.
- Parent:** I think it's pretty common for people to believe it's harmless. Have you heard anything about the risks?
- Teen:** Well, I know it can be addictive if you do it lots...but I don't. I'm in control. I'm not going to do it forever.
- Parent:** What are some reasons you wouldn't want to vape in the long run?
- Teen:** Well... I guess if it really is addictive, I don't want to get stuck in that. Plus, I know it's not good for my lungs. I don't want it messing with my health later on.
- Parent:** Those are really good reasons. What do you think about quitting now?
- Teen:** I'm not sure. I guess it would depend on how hard it is. But I think I'd be okay if I decided to stop.
- Parent:** I'm really glad you're thinking about it. It might be hard, especially if your friends aren't interested in stopping too, but there are some apps and programs out there that can help you plan and prepare. I can show you a couple of options when we get home, if that sounds okay?
- Teen:** Sure, I guess we can take a look. I don't want to be stuck with it forever.

Brief Conversations: Quick Reference

ASK

1

ASK a question to open the conversation

Begin with a gentle, question to create a safe space.

Example

"I heard you've been vaping, and I want to understand more about it. Can we talk?"

Avoid

"I can't believe you're vaping! What are you thinking?"

2

ASK open-ended questions to learn more

These encourage your teen to share more than just 'yes' or 'no' answers and may help them identify reasons to change their vaping behaviour.

Examples

"What do you like about vaping? ... Is there anything you don't like? ... Tell me more about that."

"How does vaping fit into your life right now? ... What do you think that will look like in five years?"

Avoid

"Don't you know that vaping is bad for you!?"

3

ASK permission to share

This shows respect for their independence and allows you to share information in partnership.

Example

"I read about how vaping can affect stress—would you be open to hearing about it?"

Avoid

"You say you vape to manage stress, but it actually makes it worse!"

4

ASK about quitting

Example

"What do you think about quitting?"

Avoid

"Do you want to quit?"



ACT

ACT to share information and accessible support

Once your teen opens up, listen carefully. Pay attention to whether they seem ready to quit or not.

NOT READY TO QUIT

Share information to help raise awareness



NOT AN EXPERIMENT

Not An Experiment

Website with youth-friendly information and interactive escape room game to help learn about vaping and the risks.

www.notanexperiment.ca



READY TO QUIT

Share supports that are easy to access and can help them work towards quitting



Quash®

Powered by
LUNG HEALTH FOUNDATION

Quash App

Even if they're unsure about quitting right away, this free app helps track vaping and set goals to cut back or quit.

www.quashapp.ca

The Brief Conversations Toolkit has been developed through a partnership between Ontario's public health units and the Lung Health Foundation.

quashapp.com/conversations



If you need this resource in an alternative format, please contact us at quashapp@lunghealth.ca