

With the advancement of technology comes the development of both helpful and misleading products. A new product that claims to help consumers smoke tobacco “more safely” or kick the habit altogether may be more of a hindrance than consumers believe. Electronic cigarettes (e- cigarettes) are battery operated devices that are designed to deliver nicotine, flavor, and other chemicals. E-cigarettes turn nicotine and other chemicals into vapor which are then inhaled by the consumer. Many of these products are designed to look like conventional cigarettes while others may resemble common items such as pens or computer memory sticks.

E-cigarettes are still very new and as a result, not much is known about them. The FDA does not yet regulate the production of these devices. Therefore, there is no way for the consumer to know how much nicotine they are obtaining or what types of potentially harmful chemicals they are exposing themselves and others to. According to the FDA, there is no way for consumers to know if e-cigarettes are safe for their intended use or if there is any benefit of using them at all.

Additionally, it is not known if e-cigarettes will lead young people to trying other types of tobacco products, such as conventional cigarettes. Teenagers and young adults appear to be targeted with the many different flavorings available through these devices. It is important that parents talk with their children about tobacco, including e-cigarettes.

With the growing popularity of these products, business owners or officials may also want to consider updating any smoke-free policies to include e-cigarettes.

Many current smokers may believe that e-cigarettes are safer than conventional cigarettes. Many also use them in attempt to wean themselves off of tobacco. The truth is that there is no way for the consumer to know exactly how much nicotine they are getting and harmful chemicals may still be present within the vapors produced.

If you are thinking about quitting smoking, it is recommended that you talk with your doctor. There are many FDA approved methods available such as gums, patches, lozenges, or inhalers to make quitting a little easier. If you are pregnant or uninsured, you may call the Ohio Tobacco Quit Line at 1-800-QUIT-NOW for free. You will be set up with a quit specialist to help guide you through the quitting process. You may also qualify for free nicotine patches or gift card incentives.



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