E-Cigarettes: WHAT WE KNOW

What are e-cigarettes?
• E-cigarettes are battery-operated devices that produce an inhaled aerosol.1
• E-cigarette design varies, and sometimes resembles conventional cigarettes.
• E-cigarettes are defined as tobacco products by the FDA and Minnesota law.

Are e-cigarettes safe to use?
• E-cigarettes are not regulated by the FDA. There is no way for users to know what types or concentrations of chemicals or how much nicotine they are inhaling.2,3
• E-cigarette aerosol has lower levels of toxins than conventional cigarette smoke, but studies show it contains nicotine, heavy metals, formaldehyde and other carcinogens.4,5,6
• Nicotine is the highly addictive chemical found in tobacco.
• No amount of nicotine is safe for youth. Nicotine exposure during adolescence is harmful to brain development.7,8
• E-cigarettes’ long-term impacts on the health of users and bystanders is unknown.

Who is using e-cigarettes?
• 5.9 percent of Minnesota adults used e-cigarettes at least once in the past 30 days.9
• 17.8 percent of Minnesota adults have tried an e-cigarette at least once.9
• Most e-cigarette users also use cigarettes. 65.8 percent of Minnesota adults who used e-cigarettes in the past 30 days are current smokers.9
• More young Minnesotans are using e-cigarettes. 28.4 percent of Minnesota high-school students have tried e-cigarettes.10
• 12.9 percent of high-school students and 12.8 of young adults (18-24-year-olds) used them in the past 30 days.10,9
• Most students who used e-cigarettes in the past 30 days (60.1 percent) also used conventional tobacco products.10

Can e-cigarettes help people quit smoking?
• There is no conclusive scientific evidence that e-cigarettes are effective in helping people stop smoking.11
• A scientific review raised concerns that dual use of e-cigarettes and conventional cigarettes may make quitting more difficult.11
• People looking to quit should use FDA-approved smoking cessation aids proven to be safe and effective, such as nicotine gum, lozenges and patches.
• Free quitting help is available to all Minnesotans through QUITPLAN© Services (1-888-354-PLAN/www.quitplan.com).

Why should communities care about e-cigarettes?
• Tobacco companies like Philip Morris and R.J. Reynolds have e-cigarette product lines, which are not regulated like conventional cigarettes and e-liquid.
• E-cigarettes and e-liquid are sold in flavors like gummy bear, cotton candy and many others, and flavored tobacco products appeal to children and teens.12,13
• E-cigarette use by Minnesota youth and adults has significantly increased in recent years.10,9
• Youth exposure to e-cigarette advertising increased 250 percent from 2011 to 2013.14
• A scientific review found that e-cigarette emissions can be a source of indoor air pollution and concluded that they should be included in smoke-free policies.11
• Some e-cigarette ads encourage smokers to use them in places they cannot smoke.15,16
• Research shows e-cigarette poisonings have dramatically increased in Minnesota and nationwide.17,18
How does Minnesota law treat e-cigarettes?19

• E-cigarettes containing nicotine are taxed as tobacco products and it is illegal to sell e-cigarettes to minors. Retailers must keep them behind the counter or in a locked case and obtain a tobacco license. Child-resistant packaging is required on all e-cigarette liquids, and kiosk sales are prohibited.

• E-cigarette use is still allowed in stores, bars and restaurants, but not in:
  • Public schools;
  • Hospitals, clinics and doctors’ offices;
  • Most government-operated buildings, including correctional facilities;
  • Any facility owned by the U of M or MNSCU, including dorms; and
  • Foster homes and licensed daycare facilities, including home daycares during hours of operation.

Many Minnesota communities have gone further.

• Eighteen cities and eight counties have added e-cigarettes to tobacco ordinances, including Minneapolis, Duluth, Mankato and Moorhead, and Hennepin, St. Louis and Olmsted counties.

• A number of cities and counties also prohibit e-cigarette sampling in stores.

• Target Field, Target Center and the Minnesota Zoo prohibit e-cigarette use.

Businesses can:

• Prohibit the use of e-cigarettes on their property.

Cities and counties can:

• Adopt or update policies to prohibit e-cigarette use.

• Restrict sales of flavored e-cigarettes.

• Prohibit e-cigarette sampling in stores.

Minnesota can:

• Update state law to prohibit e-cigarette use in all workplaces.

• Restrict sales of flavored e-cigarettes.

• Prohibit e-cigarette sampling in stores.

• Require manufacturers to disclose e-cigarette ingredients.