

NOVEMBER 2018 • FREE

What Every Parent's Talking About

parenting OC

Ask the Experts



Talking Vaping

Q

What are the dangers of vaping and how do I discuss these dangers with my kids?

Kid to Teen

A

When you are a parent, there are so many things to worry about—how are my child's grades? Are they healthy physically, socially and mentally? But there is something else to be aware of that is sweeping youth culture: vaping.

E-cigarettes are the cigarette of today's generation, and there are a flurry of misconceptions surrounding them and their harmful effects on teens, whose brains and vital organs are still developing until their mid-20s.

So how should you talk to your kids about today's most enticing

drug of choice? Let's get to it:

Know your subject. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has stated e-cigarettes are not safe for youth, young adults, pregnant women or adults. E-cigarettes produce an aerosol vapor, or "vape," that can contain nicotine, marijuana or other drugs. This aerosol from vaping can contain heavy metals like lead, volatile organic compounds, cancer-causing agents, nicotine and other tiny particles inhaled into the lungs.

Know your audience. Start the conversation early about why e-cigarettes are harmful for them—and if you need that third-party endorsement, set up an appointment with your child's health care provider so that they can hear from a medical professional about the health risks of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes.

Know their circles. Get to know your kid's friends' parents and come to an agreement with them that you will keep each other's child safe from alcohol and drugs in your homes. If you sense trouble, role play with your child how to deal with peer pressure and decision-making skills. You can also speak with your child's teacher and school administrator about enforcement of tobacco-free school grounds policies and tobacco prevention curriculum.

Know your values. Parents can set an example by being tobacco-free. If you use tobacco, it's never too late to quit. Free programs, like Waymakers' Project PATH (Positive Action Toward Health), are available to address drug and alcohol abuse. For more information on Project PATH, visit www.waymakersoc.org.



Dan Gleason, MPH, is the program director for Waymakers' Project PATH (Positive Action Toward Health), which is a program committed to creating safe and healthy neighborhoods by addressing public health issues like alcohol, tobacco and drug use.