

Information for clients concerned about or wanting to stop using a Vape

As a service we are currently funded to help people stop smoking tobacco, rather than nicotine containing products; however, we are free to offer advice. This is because Smokefree North Somerset adhere to the statement that VAPING IS FAR SAFER THAN SMOKING.

Using e-cigarettes is considerably less harmful than smoking tobacco cigarettes. The harm from tobacco is overwhelmingly due to its combustion (or being set alight). Tobacco smoke contains many toxicants which can be highly damaging to the health of smokers. E-cigarette vapour, in contrast, does not include any combustible by-products, as there is no combustion in the process of heating e-liquids. Although these products are not licensed medicines, they are regulated by the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016.

The assessment by Public Health England states that vaping is at least **95%** less harmful than smoking.

The main active ingredient of cigarettes is the psychoactive compound nicotine, which is also present in most e-cigarette e-liquids. Nicotine is an addictive drug which acts as a stimulant on users. However, it is not nicotine which causes harm to cigarette smokers but the by-products of tobacco combustion. Long-term use of nicotine consumed through nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) has not been found to increase the risk of serious health problems.

Nicotine does not cause smoking related disease, such as cancers and heart disease. These are caused by other chemicals found in tobacco smoke. Nicotine is addictive and this is why people continue to smoke despite knowing about the harmful effects of tobacco, and because of this nicotine in e-cigarettes poses little danger to adult users.

In order to prevent accidental poisoning of children, e-cigarettes and liquids should be stored away safely (just as you would with household cleaning products and medicines, including NRT products). There are some health risks associated with the other ingredients of e-cigarettes, but they are low compared to tobacco cigarettes. Some studies show that longer-term e-cigarette use can be a protective factor against relapse back to smoking.

We do however appreciate that despite the lower risk, some clients may wish to stop using their vape and need some strategies to help with this. Therefore, we have come up with these options, (Please note that any option requiring NRT will need to be purchased by the client and not funded by Smokefree North Somerset) :

OPTION 1

Week 1: Lowest strength patch and high dose or other oral NRT or strength of e-liquid

Week 2: Middle strength patch and low dose oral NRT or medium strength e-liquid (advise to use less of oral product or e-cigarette)

Week 3: High strength patch and low dose oral NRT or low strength e-liquid

Week 4: High strength patch only

Week 5: Medium strength patch

Week 6: Low strength patch

Week 7: Onwards: no nicotine at all, try ordinary chewing gum or mints

OPTION 2:

If only an e-cigarette is being used, either follow the above procedure, or gradually reduce the strength of the e-liquid until nicotine free liquid is used.

Additional tips:

Make some rules for yourself around your e cig use, i.e. only use outdoors, do not use in the car, avoid trigger use and change habits.

Find other ways to de stress, i.e. medication, deep breathing exercises, exercise.

If using NRT gum to help wean off, follow a programme of every other gum being replaced with an ordinary chewing gum, or by cutting the gums in half each time and gradually reducing to nothing. (Please note, never cut patches in half as it renders them ineffective).

It is important to note that all of us who use nicotine are different and will have differing reasons for using tobacco, NRT or e-cigarettes and it is important to understand these reasons. Some of you will find it hard at times, but with support, becoming nicotine free is achievable.

Smokefree North Somerset Specialist Service offer group support to anyone struggling to become nicotine-free, and this service is free, however the NRT or e-cigarettes must be purchased by the individual.

We acknowledge that there have been some worrying reports from the USA on the safety of vaping, and the link to those cases is black market Cannabis oils.

Unlike the US, all e-cigarette products in the UK are tightly regulated for quality and safety by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency. Any bad experiences can be reported under the yellow card scheme. Also, to date no serious side-effects have been reported in the UK. In Britain, you can check on the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) website whether the product you're using has been notified and can be legally sold.

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