How Can I Tell if My Child is JUULing or "Vaping?"

If you're concerned that your child may be JUULing, here are a few signs you should be on the lookout for:

Unexplained Sweet Scent

With the JUUL product available in 16 different flavors, many of which are sweet and/or fruity, be on the lookout for an unexplainable, sweet scent which may indicate your child is JUULing. (Keep in mind that JUULs create far less aerosol or "cloud" than traditional e-cigarettes, so it may be more difficult to detect the scent.)

USB Flash Drive That Doesn't Look Normal

If you come across an unusual looking USB flash drive, often with holes on one end (the mouthpiece), chances are it's a JUUL and not an ordinary flash drive.

Skipping the Caffeine

Some e-cigarette users suddenly find themselves developing sensitivity to caffeine. So, if your teen used to be hitting coffee regularly or chugging energy drinks and is now suddenly passing on their favorite caffeinated drinks, this could be a red flag.

Increased Thirst

Dehydration, often described by vapers as dry or cotton mouth is actually a fairly common side effect of JUULing and "vaping" in general. Propylene Glycol, one of the ingredients in e-liquid, is the primary cause of the dehydration. The substance has been shown to absorb and hold in water molecules, preventing them from being absorbed into the body. Therefore, if you notice your teen drinking more than they typically do or you happen to notice other signs of dehydration such as dark circles under their eyes, you may want to delve a little deeper to determine the cause.

Nosebleeds

Typically, when a person is JUULing they exhale the vapor through their nose which can cause the inside of their nostrils to become dried triggering random nosebleeds. The chemical in the e-liquid, Propylene Glycol, is a dehydrating chemical that strips the moisture from the inside of the nose. So, if your child is suddenly experiencing nosebleeds, it probably deserves more attention to determine the cause.
How Can I Tell if My Child is JUULing or Vaping?

Bloody Sores in the Mouth / Smoker's Cough

According to a 2017 article in Science News for Students, entitled "Concerns Explode Over New Health Risks of Vaping," researchers are now linking e-cigarettes with mouth wounds that won't heal and smoker's cough. The vapors disrupt the immune system which can have harsh effects on human cells. Keep your eye on your child if they complain of sores in their mouth or begin to show signs of an unexplained cough.

Finding Organic Cotton Balls and Metallic Wires

If you stumble across any unbleached, organic cotton balls or thin metallic coils, which are components used when "vaping," it's typically a dead giveaway that your child is "vaping."

Discarded Atomizers

The atomizer is an important part of any e-cigarette. It's the component of the e-cigarette that turns the e-liquid into an aerosol. The atomizers don't last forever and eventually need to be discarded.

Discarded JUUL Pods

To use a JUUL, users purchase JUUL "pods." As the name suggests, the pod systems are e-cigarettes that make use of a pod as opposed to a traditional atomizer, although they pretty much serve the same function. If you happen to see discarded JUUL pods in your child's backpack, bedroom, pockets or elsewhere, there's reason for concern.

When approaching the subject of JUULing with your child, it's important to remember that teenagers view JUULing as cool, fairly harmless and fun, and the pressure to try it among their peers is oftentimes intense.

Experts say it's important that we talk with our kids calmly and honestly about tobacco, e-cigarettes, and nicotine addiction. There's actually a fairly good chance your child has no idea that JUULs contain nicotine or the damaging impact they can have on their health. Help them understand just how harmful JUULing is, how addictive nicotine is and how nicotine addiction can affect their health, both short and long-term, as well as their performance in school and in sports.

Above all, keep the lines of communication open with your child. The more comfortable they are coming to you to discuss important issues, the more open they'll be to further discussion and the more accepting they'll be of your guidance.

Resources and Support

For more information or to learn about youth-centered tobacco cessation programs available to help your teen quit JUUL and other e-cigarette products visit the American Lung Association at Lung.org/ecigs or call 1-800-LUNG-USA.
E-cigarettes, “Vapes”, and JUULs
What Parents Should Know

Are e-cigarettes less harmful than cigarettes?

There is no FDA oversight of the manufacturing of these products – which means there is no oversight regarding potentially harmful ingredients.

- E-cigarettes almost always contain harmful ingredients including nicotine.
- Acrolein, a known ingredient of many e-cigarettes, causes irreversible lung damage. Nicotine exposure during adolescence and can harm the developing brain.
- The most popular e-cigarette among teens is JUUL
  - All JUUL pods contain some nicotine – something many youth don’t realize.
  - According to the manufacturer, one JUUL pod may contain as much nicotine as a pack of cigarettes.
- No e-cigarette has been found to be safe and effective by FDA in helping smokers quit.

Is there a difference between e-cigarettes and JUULing?

- No. JUULs may look different, but they’re actually a type of e-cigarette.
- E-cigarettes are battery powered and deliver nicotine through a liquid which turns into an aerosol.
- The e-liquids come in fruit flavors that appeal to youth.

JUUL is more discrete and looks like a USB drive. Other e-cigarettes may look like phones.

- Cartridge-based e-cigarettes like JUUL contain nicotine salts that do not produce vapor or visible emissions when the device is used and may make the product even more addictive.
- JUUL claims that some of its pods have roughly as much nicotine as an entire pack of cigarettes.

39% Use by “friend or family member”

31% Availability of “flavors such as mint, candy, fruit, or chocolate”

17% Belief that “they are less harmful than other forms of tobacco such as cigarettes”

---

Does the American Lung Association agree with the Food and Drug Administration that youth use of e-cigarettes has reached an epidemic?

- Yes, the American Lung Association agrees that e-cigarette use among youth has reached epidemic levels.
- American Lung Association has been asking the FDA to take action on e-cigarettes for a decade.
- E-cigarettes are the most commonly used tobacco products among youth and have been for several years now.
- Many youth don’t realize how they are harming their lungs and their brains by using e-cigarettes.

Several years ago, one study estimated there were about 7,700 flavors of e-cigarettes on the market at that time.

How is the American Lung Association helping your children?

- The American Lung Association urges the Food and Drug Administration to take meaningful action to crack down against products that target youth.
- The Lung Association and our partners filed a lawsuit against FDA for its delay of reviewing products currently for sale.
- The American Lung Association is working to implement proven effective policies that will reduce youth from e-cigarettes, including raising the minimum age of sale to 21 and increasing the price of products.
- Education programs available
  - Not on Tobacco (N-O-T) is the American Lung Association’s teen smoking cessation program and helps teens who want to quit, providing the tools, information and support to quit for good.
  - Alternative to Suspension program is offered as an option to students who face suspension for violation of school tobacco-use policy and is administered by an adult facilitator in either a one-on-one or group format in a school or community-based setting.

Contact

Lung HelpLine and Tobacco Quitline is a telephone support line available in over 200 languages, and is a free service allowing callers access to expert staff, including registered nurses, respiratory therapists, pharmacists and certified tobacco cessation specialists.

1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872) or www.Lung.org/helpline.

Learn more about these and other programs at www.Lung.org.

Contact your local American Lung Association office for information on youth leadership groups and other youth tobacco initiatives. 1-800-LUNGUSA