

E Cigarettes or electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS).

This briefing represents the views of Public Health Wales based on guidance from the World Health Organisation ¹. It aims to inform schools about e-cigarettes to enable them to be more informed to develop their own school policies.

What are e-cigarettes? Electronic cigarettes, e-cigs or ENDS (electronic nicotine delivery systems) are devices whose function is to vaporize and deliver to the lungs of the user a chemical mixture typically composed of nicotine, propylene glycol and other chemicals, although some products claim to contain no nicotine. A number of ENDS are offered in flavours that can be particularly attractive to adolescents.

Most ENDS are shaped to look like their conventional (tobacco) counterparts (e.g. cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos, pipes, hookahs or shishas). They are also sometimes made to look like everyday items such as pens and USB memory sticks, for people who wish to use the product without other people noticing.

Examples of various ENDS



Some products are currently being marketed as **e-shisha**. E-shisha products, like e-cigarettes, consist of devices that vaporise liquid containing different types of chemical flavourings and a solvent. E-shisha are normally described as nicotine free. However, the e-liquid or 'e-juice', which is normally sold separately from the device, may or may not contain nicotine. Like e-cigarettes they are available in a range of nicotine concentrations, either rechargeable or disposable, and with a range of flavours. There is therefore no meaningful distinction between e-shisha products and e-cigarettes, other than marketing.

Why is there concern about e-cigarettes?

There has been a rapid increase in the use, availability and promotion Electronic cigarettes. They have been developed as a 'lifestyle' or consumer product, and not as a medicine. While there is potential for ENDS to reduce the harm from smoking or help smokers to quit, their effectiveness or safety has not been demonstrated.

The amount of nicotine contained in e-cigarettes can vary between and within brands, from nicotine-free products through to high doses of nicotine. However, there is very little quality control which often means there is difference between what is on the label and what is delivered to the user.

ENDS mimic smoking a cigarette and could play a role in normalising smoking behaviour. Considerable strides have been made in de-normalising smoking but there is much more to do. Anything which may reverse the progress made to de-normalise smoking would be a risk to population health.

The presentation of e-cigs as a safe way to smoke may provide a route to nicotine addiction for children and young people, this may in turn lead to smoking tobacco.

School Policy

Based on the current evidence available Public Health Wales advises the following:

- Ensure school smoke free policies clearly prohibited the use of E-cigarettes and ENDS onsite including pupils, staff and visitors
- Ensure pupils, staff and visitors are aware of the changes to school policy regarding use of E-cigarettes and ENDS on site
- Ensure pupils and staff who wish to quit smoking are sign posted to stop smoking services
- Pupils should be educated about e-cigarettes within the curriculum alongside other drug education

Young people and quitting smoking

NICE guidance on smoking suggests that young people (aged 12-17) are offered clear information, advice and support on how to stop smoking; and they are encouraged to use local NHS Stop Smoking Services.

Stop Smoking Wales

Telephone: 0800 085 2219 **website** www.stopsmokingwales.com

ASH Wales the Filter offers information and advice to young people about smoking.

Email: thefilter@ashwales.org.uk **Website** www.thefilterwales.org

Sources of further information

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