



BETTERSAFE

WELCOA'S ONLINE BULLETIN FOR YOUR FAMILY'S SAFETY

What You Need to Know About Vaping

You've likely seen and heard about vaping. Vaping devices, also known as e-cigarettes, vape pens, and e-hookahs among other terms, come in many shapes and sizes. Some look like traditional cigarettes, cigars, or pipes. Others are shaped like every-day objects, such as pens or USB memory sticks. In recent months, there have been several reports of lung injuries and deaths linked to vaping in the U.S. And those aren't the only risks that come with vaping.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

While they may look different, most vaping devices work in a similar way. Puffing activates a battery-powered heating device. This heats the liquid in a cartridge, turning it into vapors that are inhaled.

Vaping exposes the lungs to a variety of chemicals. These may include the main active chemicals in tobacco (nicotine) or marijuana (THC), flavorants, and other ingredients that are added to vaping liquids. Plus, other chemicals can be produced during the vaporizing process.

If the liquid has nicotine in it, then the user is inhaling nicotine along with the other ingredients in the liquid. While vaping devices work similarly, some are more powerful than others. They create more vapor and deliver more chemicals.



Talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.

IS IT BETTER THAN TRADITIONAL CIGARETTES?

So how safe is vaping? Studies suggest nicotine vaping may be less harmful than traditional cigarettes when people who regularly smoke switch to them as a complete replacement. But nicotine vaping could still damage your health.

Your lungs aren't meant to deal with the constant challenge of non-air that people are putting into them—sometimes as many as 200 puffs a day—day after day, week after week, year after year.

You're inhaling propylene glycol, vegetable glycerin, flavorants that were meant to be eaten but not inhaled, and nicotine. And all of those are heated up in this little reactor, which is an e-cigarette. When they get heated up, those components can turn into other potentially dangerous chemicals.

One harmful chemical may be a thickening agent called Vitamin E acetate, which is sometimes used as an additive in THC-containing vape products. The CDC identified it as a “chemical of concern” among people with vaping-associated lung injuries. They recommend avoiding any vaping product containing Vitamin E acetate or THC, particularly those from informal sources like friends, family, or in-person or online dealers.

Vaping is now more popular among teens than smoking traditional cigarettes. One in four high school seniors say they vaped nicotine in the past month. And studies have found that teens who vape nicotine may be more likely to go on to smoke traditional cigarettes.

Marijuana vaping has also increased dramatically among teens. About 20% of high school seniors vaped marijuana in the past year. The rates have more than doubled in the past two years.

New laws are aimed at curbing vaping among teens. People must now be 21 to buy any tobacco product, including vaping products. And companies can no longer produce and sell flavors that appeal to children like fruit and mint.

If you’ve already started vaping or smoking cigarettes, it’s never too late to quit.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO HELP YOU STOP USING NICOTINE:

- » Establish meaningful goals. Are you quitting to better protect your health? Become a good example? Write down why you want to quit and remind yourself of those goals every day.
- » Set your quit date.
- » Understand your triggers, so you can avoid them.
- » Imagine your life without nicotine. Picture the positives of quitting.
- » Build a team of people who will support you while you quit.





DAY IN DAY OUT

WELCOA'S ONLINE BULLETIN FOR YOUR LIFESTYLE

Should We Be Quick to Fast?

A CLOSER LOOK AT FASTING DIETS

Throughout history, people have experienced periods when food was either scarce or completely lacking, so they were forced to fast. But current technology—like refrigeration, transportation, and electric lighting—have made food more readily available. This has shifted our eating patterns. People now eat, on average, throughout a 14-hour period each day. Studies suggest that this constant food intake may lead to health problems.

What you eat matters. Research has shown that the types of food you eat affect your health. But what about the timing? Scientists are just beginning to understand that when you eat may also make a difference. Researchers have started looking at whether fasting can have potential benefits for some people.

Fasting diets mainly focus on the timing of when you can eat. There are many different fasting diets, sometimes called “intermittent fasting.”

In time-restricted feeding, you eat every day but only during a limited number of hours. So, you may only eat between a six- to eight-hour window each day. For example, you might eat breakfast and lunch, but skip dinner. In alternate-day fasting, you eat every other day and no or few calories on the days in between. Another type restricts calories during the week but not on weekends.



Talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.

But scientists don't know much about what happens to your body when you fast. Most research has been done in cells and animals in the lab. That work has provided early clues as to how periods without food might affect the body.

In some animals, certain fasting diets seem to protect against diabetes, heart disease, and cognitive decline. Fasting has even slowed the aging process and protected against cancer in some experiments.

Now, studies are starting to look at what happens in people, too. Early results have found that some types of fasting may have positive effects on aspects of health like blood sugar control, blood pressure, and inflammation. But fasting can also cause weight loss. So researchers are studying whether the beneficial changes seen in the body are side effects of the weight loss or the fasting process itself.

IS FASTING RIGHT FOR YOU?

Fasting may bring health benefits, but experts caution that there's still a lot of unknowns. For some, fasting may cause problems. For example, studies have found that people who regularly fast more than 16 or 18 hours a day have a higher risk of gallstones. They're also more likely to need surgery to remove the gallbladder.

Experts note that eating for 12 hours and then fasting for 12 hours is likely safe for most people. Researchers are also looking at fasting-mimicking diets, which they hope will be safer and easier to follow than completely fasting.

Fasting may bring health benefits, but not eating can be dangerous for some people. Talk with your health care provider first, especially if you:

- » Are under the age of 25.
- » Are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- » Take insulin or other medications to control diabetes.
- » Have been prescribed any medication that must be taken with food.
- » Have a seizure disorder.
- » Work the night shift.
- » Operate heavy machinery at your job.





Making Sure You Have Safe Fun in the Sun

Did you know that the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays can damage your skin in as little as 15 minutes? Nearly 5 million people are treated for skin cancer each year in the United States. Skin cancer can be serious, expensive, and sometimes even deadly. Fortunately, most skin cancers can be prevented.

You can reduce your and your family's risk of skin damage and skin cancer by following some simple strategies. Here are some ways to protect yourself while out enjoying the sunshine!

SUN SAFETY TIPS

Damage from exposure to UV rays builds up over time, so sun protection should start at an early age. Some ways to stay sun-safe outdoors include **wearing sun protection gear** like a hat with a wide brim and sunglasses to protect you face and eyes, and wearing a long-sleeved shirt and pants or a long skirt for additional protection when possible. **Sunglasses** protect your eyes from UV rays and reduce the risk of cataracts and other eye problems. Wrap-around sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB rays offer the best protection by blocking UV rays from the side.

Seek shade, especially during midday hours.

This includes 10 am to 4 pm, March through October, and 9 am to 3 pm, November through February. Be extra careful around surfaces that reflect the sun's rays, like snow, sand, water, and concrete. Umbrellas, trees, or other shelters can provide relief from the sun.



Talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.



Apply a thick layer of broad spectrum

sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher at least 15 minutes before going outside, even on cloudy or overcast days. Most sunscreen products work by absorbing, reflecting, or scattering sunlight. They contain chemicals that interact with the skin to protect it from UV rays. All products do not have the same ingredients; if your skin reacts badly to one product, try another one or call a doctor. Reapply sunscreen at least every 2 hours and after swimming, sweating, or toweling off. Don't forget to put a thick layer on all parts of exposed skin. Get help for hard-to-reach places like your back. And remember, sunscreen works best when combined with other options to prevent UV damage.

IS INDOOR TANNING SAFER?

Indoor and outdoor tanning often begin in the teen years and continue into adulthood. Don't wait to teach your children about the dangers of tanning. Children may be more receptive than teens, so start the conversation early, before they start outdoor tanning or indoor tanning.

Indoor tanning:

- » Exposes users to intense levels of UV rays, a known cause of cancer.
- » Does not offer protection against future sunburns. A "base tan" is actually a sign of skin damage.
- » Can spread germs that can cause serious skin infections.
- » Can lead to serious injury. Indoor tanning accidents and burns send more than 3,000 people to the emergency room each year.
- » The U.S. Food and Drug Administration states that indoor tanning should not be used by anyone younger than age 18. Many states restrict the use of indoor tanning by minors.



There's no such thing as a safe tan!



TO YOUR HEALTH

WELCOA'S ONLINE GENERAL WELLNESS BULLETIN

Caring for Your Cognitive Health

Maintaining your cognitive health—the ability to clearly think, learn, and remember—is important for your overall well-being. As you age, it's common to experience some decline in cognitive function. That may mean occasionally losing things, forgetting words, or briefly forgetting what day it is. Or you may notice that it takes longer to learn new things. Such symptoms don't necessarily mean that you're developing Alzheimer's disease or another type of dementia.

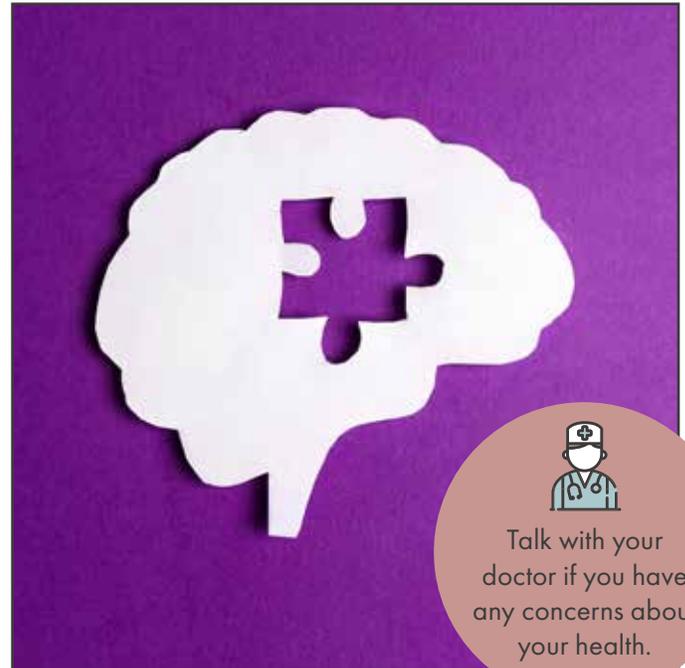
Fortunately, there are many things you can do to protect your cognitive health as you age.

COMMON CAUSES OF MEMORY LOSS

Many things can cause memory or other thinking problems. Depression, anxiety, an infection, or even certain medications can cause cognitive changes. Sometimes these types of issues can be resolved with treatment.

If you experience a sudden change in thinking, memory, or mood, it may be caused by a new medication. Some drugs may not cause cognitive changes when taken on their own but can do so when combined with other medications. Even common supplements or over-the-counter remedies can cause these types of interactions.

Sometimes, if you have more than one doctor, one might not know what the others prescribed. Experts note that older adults benefit from having a list of all their over-the-counter, herbal, and prescribed medications with them whenever they see a health care professional.



Certain medications can also have dangerous, or even deadly, effects when combined with alcohol. And alcohol alone poses risks for the older brain. It can take less alcohol to alter judgment, coordination, balance, or sleep patterns in an older adult.

Dangerous drinking habits have been rising among older adults in the U.S. A recent NIH-funded study found that 1 in 10 Americans aged 65 or older binge drinks regularly. That means drinking four or more drinks on the same occasion for women and five or more for men.

Older adults may change their drinking habits to cope with the death of a partner or other loved one, or because they're lonely. But drinking can also be part of social activities for older adults.

A recent study has used brain imaging to see how alcohol affects the brain. They found that older adults who misused alcohol had greater loss of brain tissue

compared with their peers who didn't drink. This was true even if they started misusing alcohol later in life.

The good news is that some problems with thinking or memory caused by medications or alcohol misuse can be reversed.

BUILDING BRAIN POWER

There are many things you can do to protect your brain as you age. Research shows that cognitive activity, physical activity, and social engagement are associated with better cognitive functioning in older adulthood.

Managing your health conditions is also important. Controlling your blood pressure, for example, reduces the risk of having a small stroke (bleeding from blood vessels in the brain). Small strokes can cause temporary or permanent cognitive problems.

Feeling a sense of purpose in one's life also seems to help protect older adults from cognitive decline. One recent study found that people who felt more purpose in life had fewer symptoms from brain changes linked to Alzheimer's disease.

Good overall health can help you maintain your brain health. These tips can help you stay active and healthier physically and mentally:

- » Choose healthy foods whenever possible
- » Drink plenty of water every day
- » Limit your use of alcohol
- » Don't smoke or use tobacco products
- » Get enough sleep
- » Make physical activity part of your routine
- » Keep your mind active with learning, teaching, and volunteering
- » Stay connected with loved ones, friends, and your community
- » Manage chronic health problems like diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol

