

Know! The Dangers of Electronic Cigarettes



Being touted as safer, cheaper, cleaner and sometimes even, "dentist recommended," *electronic cigarettes* have hit the streets (and the malls) as the newest smoking alternative. Since they contain no tobacco, they are flying past the radar of our state smoking ban and new federal restrictions on the tobacco industry. But don't be fooled by the stylish look or fun flavors, these products are dangerous.

E-cigarettes put the power in the users' hands by allowing them to choose how much nicotine they'd like to smoke and for how long. Where a traditional cigarette ends and calls for a new one to be lit, this new device allows a smoker to just keep on going.

The "e-liquid" that fills these smoking devices can contain as much as 36 milligrams of nicotine, a potentially lethal dose for a child. Nicotine is a powerful drug; as addictive as heroin and cocaine. It is a poison that affects the brain, heart, blood pressure and breathing.

Though starter kits average around \$100, it would be naive to think that these products won't wind up in the hands of kids. They also fly easily undetected past a parent's radar. Some brands appear to look like a tube of mascara or a writing pen. And unlike the traditional cigarette, "e-cigs" leave no ash, smoke, odor or bad breath behind. At about the size of a normal cigarette, it can be easily hidden in a pocket or purse, ready to use.

Parent Tips:

- Be aware of your child's risk of using *e-cigarettes*.
- Talk to your child about the dangers of nicotine in any form.
- Make clear your feelings about your child not using this product.
- Be a role model for your child by not using nicotine.

For information on breaking the nicotine addiction visit the American Cancer Society at www.cancer.org, click on, *Guide to quitting smoking*.

For FDA warnings against *e-cigarettes*, visit www.fda.gov , search, "electronic cigarettes."

(The Columbus Dispatch, June 13, 2009), ("Great American Health Challenge," American Cancer Society, Oct. 2007), (Drug Information Online, 2009), ("Mind Over Matter; Nicotine," NIDA for Teens, 2009)