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CUTTING THROUGH THE SMOKE

A GUIDE TO TALKING TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT TOBACCO

Before you have a chat, get the facts!

**WRITTEN BY THE LUNG
ASSOCIATION, MANITOBA INC.**

This guide will help you talk with the youth in your life about smoking and vaping.

Helping the youth in your life stay tobacco-free is an essential step to good health. To do that, talk to them about smoking and vaping—it gives them a better chance of staying tobacco-free.



TALK

IF THE ADULT IS A SMOKER, WILL THE YOUTH LISTEN?

Yes! It's even more important for adults who smoke to talk with their young adults about smoking and vaping. That's because the young adult in your life is more likely to start smoking. Your conversation can cut that risk in half. Tell them about your experience: how hard it is to quit, how it affects your health, and how much you wish you'd never have started. Sharing your honest feelings with your youth can have a considerable impact.

Vaping is on the rise!

The latest youth statistics show:

- 29% of students in grades 10 - 12 reported trying a cigarette (daily or occasional)
- 3% of students in grades 7-12 are current smokers

(Source: 2018-2019 Canadian Student Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs Survey)

- Manitoba students in grades 7-12, use of vaping products increased by a substantial 21.5% in 2019

(Source: 2019 Canadian Statistics, Manitoba Youth)



LET'S TALK TOBACCO

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COMMERCIAL & TRADITIONAL TOBACCO

Commercial Tobacco:

IT IS HIGHLY ADDICTIVE AND HAS OVER 7000 CHEMICALS, INCLUDING SOME TO CAUSE CANCER.

Traditional Tobacco:

Sometimes known as sacred tobacco, traditional tobacco has been used by most First Nation cultures for thousands of years. It is one of the four sacred medicines given to the people of Turtle Island from the creator.

It is used in ceremonies, prayer, and healing when seeking guidance or assistance.

Traditional tobacco can be burned or offered to the land to communicate with the creator in prayer.

Traditional tobacco is a different species of tobacco plant than what is used in cigarettes.



HOW CAN I TELL IF SOMEONE IS VAPING OR SMOKING?

Vaping products can be very discrete. It can be tough to tell if the youth in your life is vaping. The vape devices can look like highlighters, flash drives, and other small tech devices. They smell great as well, leaving the people around them unaware that they are even vaping. Get an idea of what vaping devices look like before you start your talk.

Smoking cigarettes is less discrete, and we all know that the smell lingers on their clothes.

Let's Talk Vaping.

I have heard that “vaping” is a safer alternative to cigarettes. Is it true? The fact is, we don't really know. Very little is known about the long-term effects of “vaping” or the effects of second-hand exposure. Studies show that these vapors can irritate airways and cause breathing issues in people with asthma. Therefore, health Canada advises against their use. Try to make it clear that smoke in any form does not belong in their lungs.

What is in a vape?

A cartridge containing water, sweet flavoring, and sometimes nicotine in a base of propylene glycol and vegetable glycerin is unregulated, mostly untested, and varies greatly from brand to brand.

How does a vape work?

A typical e-cigarette has a battery and an atomizer that heats the liquid mixture to make vapor. This vapor is inhaled and rapidly enters the lungs. If an e-cigarette contains nicotine, there's a risk of becoming addicted, and this could lead your child to try cigarettes.

What else should I know?

These products are made to look attractive and tasty and have sweet flavors such as cherry, banana, and vanilla.





Ways to say "NO" to vaping;

- "I'm saving for a new video game."
- "There are some new clothes I want to buy."
- "People in my family have gotten cancer from smoking."
- "I won't be able to make the team if I'm slowed down by smoking."

And something that works a lot better than you might expect:

- "No thanks."

8 EASY STEPS

WHEN IT COMES TO TALKING TO THE TEEN IN YOUR LIFE ABOUT TOBACCO

1) Think about what you want to say

Put yourself in their shoes and pick a few points you think your child can relate to. For example, if you and your child see a young person smoking, ask, “How much tobacco use do you see in your school? I wonder if it’s the same when I was your age?”

2) Set aside the time

By scheduling a time to talk to your child, you’re letting them know they are important enough to have your undivided attention. Make sure to eliminate distractions—turn off cell phones, video games, and TVs. It’s also important to make sure you spend a quantity of time with your child during the week, doing chores, running errands, playing games. That way, they know that you’re available for them.

3) Ask what they think about tobacco use

Listen carefully to what they say; it will make them feel heard. Then talk to them about their thoughts on smoking and vaping. Repeating back to them what they say shows them you understand.

4) Share your feelings about tobacco use

Be honest with your child; you don’t want them to use tobacco— or even try it. And reinforce that you’re always there to listen. For example, if one of their friends has offered them a cigarette, or if they’re feeling too much pressure, you want to know about it— because you care.

5) Then share a few facts about tobacco use

Your child may think smoking or vaping won't affect them until they are older, but don't get sidetracked by the long-term effects. Tell them what can happen right now! Immediate effects may include sore throats, more colds, a constant cough, and an increased risk of asthma. These could lower their ability to participate in the sports they love. Or appeal to their vanity. Smoking makes people unattractive; it makes their breath and clothes stink from cigarettes, and nicotine stains their hair, fingernails, and teeth.

6) Find out what they know about e-cigarettes (vaping)

The fact is, we don't really know if vaping is safer than smoking. Very little is known about the long-term effects of "vaping" or the effects of second-hand exposure. Studies show that these vapors can irritate airways and cause breathing issues in people. Health Canada advises against their use. Try to make it clear that smoke in any form does not belong in their lungs.

7) Talk to them about peer pressure

A school-mate may soon offer your child cigarettes, and this kind of peer pressure is difficult to deal with—even for adults. So practice saying "No" to tobacco. It will help your child feel confident. There are many ways for them to say "No." There isn't one right answer.

8) Keep talking to them about smoking and tobacco

Every conversation you have about smoking and vaping helps your child stay healthy and tobacco-free. It tells your child that you care, and it keeps the lines of communication open and could help your child let you know about other things in their lives.



**DEVELOPED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MANITOBA HEALTH, AND
SENIORS CARE**

For more information contact:

Hailey Coleman

Certified Tobacco Educator & Health Programs Coordinator

1-(204) 774-5501

Email: info@mb.lung.ca

Website: www.mb.lung.ca