



# kNOw Vaping Fact Sheet

## PURPOSE

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The purpose of this document is to provide school divisions, school administrators, and school board members with information on vaping, realities of vaping among youth in Saskatchewan, suggested strategies for schools, and additional vaping resources.

## VAPING 101

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What is vaping?

Vaping is the act of inhaling and exhaling an aerosol produced by a vaping product, such as an electronic cigarette. Vaping doesn't require burning like cigarette smoking.<sup>1</sup>

## HOW DO VAPES WORK?

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The device heats and vaporizes the liquid into an aerosol. This liquid is often flavoured and can contain nicotine, one of the world's most addictive substances.<sup>2</sup>

## WHAT ARE THE CONCERNS WITH VAPING?

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Industries offer a range of nicotine levels in vape products and target youth through various flavours such as berry, mint, and mango.<sup>4</sup>

Children and youth are especially susceptible to the harmful effects of nicotine. Vaping nicotine can lead to impulse control issues and cognitive and behavioural problems.<sup>5</sup> Nicotine is highly addictive and can make it hard to quit vaping or smoking. In students grade 7-12 who had tried both smoking and vaping, 29% tried smoking first, and 53% tried vaping first.<sup>3</sup> Young people who vape nicotine have higher odds of transitioning to tobacco cigarettes which may lead to numerous health impacts.<sup>6</sup>

In 2022, the Canadian Tobacco and Nicotine Survey (CTNS) found that the prevalence of vaping cannabis was 14% for youth in grades 7 to 12.<sup>3</sup> More information about vaping and cannabis can be found at: <https://www.drugfreekidscanada.org/>.

In Canada, 20% of reported cases of vaping-associated lung illness were in youth 15 to 19 years of age. The exact causes and chemicals associated with these types of injuries are still under investigation in Canada.<sup>9</sup>

A survey of Canadian pediatricians identified a wide range of cases of severe vaping-related injuries and illnesses among children and youth. The cases were associated with the routine use or malfunctioning of a vaping device or ingestion of vaping substances. The most common health issues were respiratory distress/lung injury. Other harms included nicotine toxicity, abdominal pain and nausea/vomiting. Many of the cases required admission to a hospital ward or intensive care unit. Several of the youth treated had ongoing health issues.<sup>10</sup>

Researchers are still learning more about the risks of vaping and how vaping affects health. There is adequate evidence to justify efforts to prevent the use of vaping products by youth and people who do not smoke. The Canadian Tobacco and Nicotine Survey (CTNS) demonstrated that many students do not understand the risks of vaping. When asked, 48% of students believed that vaping with nicotine is of “great risk” while 21% perceived vaping without nicotine to be of “great risk”.<sup>3</sup>

## VAPING IN SASKATCHEWAN

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A [2021-22 survey](#) found that 38% of Saskatchewan students in grades 7 to 12 reported having tried e-cigarettes. In Saskatchewan, 24% of youth in grades 7 to 12 had used an e-cigarette in the past 30 days. These vaping rates are higher for Saskatchewan than Canada.<sup>3</sup>

In Canada, more youth vape than adults. Statistics from 2022 show that only 4% of Canadians vaped in the past 30 days.<sup>8</sup> This means approximately 4 times more Canadian youth vape than adults do.

**Canadian Student Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs Survey 2021-2022<sup>3</sup>**

	Ever vaped	Last 30 day vape use
Saskatchewan	38%	24%
Canada	29%	17%

## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE INFLUENCES ON YOUTH VAPING RATES?

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Studies found that motivations to vape among youth include curiosity, enjoyment, and to reduce stress.<sup>3</sup> In addition, a [2020 Heart and Stroke survey](#) found that peer and friend influence is a major factor for youth to start vaping.<sup>4</sup> This survey also found that social media exposure is an influence to start vaping.<sup>4</sup>

Due to the sleek and modern design of vapes, youth are able to easily hide vaping from parents and educators.<sup>11</sup> Not only are vapes easy to hide, but youth reported they are also easy to acquire. More than half of the students surveyed in 2021-22 (whether they used vapour products or not) thought it would be “fairly easy” or “very easy” to get an e-cigarette with nicotine if they wanted one.<sup>3</sup>

Although some smokers use vaping to try to quit smoking and vape companies brand vaping as an effective method for smoking cessation, many youth who vape have never smoked a cigarette. Of the students that vape, 39% indicated that they had never smoked a cigarette.<sup>3</sup> For more information about vaping and quitting smoking go to: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/smoking-tobacco/vaping/smokers.html>

## SOURCES OF VAPING PRODUCTS

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In 2021-22, 79% of Canadian students grades 7 to 12 that had vaped in the last 30 days used social sources (e.g. friends and family) to get their vaping products.<sup>3</sup> These numbers were slightly higher for grades 7 to 9 than grades 10 to 12. Approximately 21% of students who had vaped in the last 30 days reported getting their vaping products from a retail source (e.g., in-store or online). These numbers were twice as high for grades 10 to 12 than grades 7 to 9.<sup>3</sup>

Kilcommons et al. conducted a study in 2020 of “secret shoppers” in three Alberta cities in which over 40% of vape shop vendors were willing to sell to underage youth, or sell to young people in other improper shop scenarios (e.g., invalid identification).<sup>12</sup> As well, the Vaping Compliance and Enforcement Report conducted by Health Canada in 2024 revealed that upon inspection, 38% of vape shops were non-compliant to current regulations.<sup>13</sup>

Although federal regulations have set requirements to limit youth access of vapes through online shopping, studies show that these requirements can be circumvented.<sup>12,14,15</sup> Braak et al. (2020) conducted a study in Canada, United States of America, and England in which 21.6% of underage purchases were from online sources in the past 12 months.<sup>14</sup>

## LEGISLATION

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In order to reduce youth vaping rates, federal and provincial governments in Canada have enacted legislation to protect youth from the risks of vaping. The federal government regulates the manufacture, sale, labelling and promotion of tobacco and vaping products. The federal legislation includes a maximum nicotine concentration for vaping products marketed in Canada and prohibits the packaging and sale of vaping products if the nicotine concentration is above this maximum. In addition, in Saskatchewan, vapour products are not allowed to be sold or given to individuals under 19 years of age.<sup>16</sup>

The Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act and regulations regulate the sale, display, promotion and use of vapour products in Saskatchewan.<sup>17</sup> The regulations limit the sale of most flavoured vapour products to age-restricted, specialty vape shops.

Saskatchewan legislation prohibits vaping in schools, including school grounds. Guidance for schools regarding this legislation can found at: [The Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act - Information for Schools](#).

You can find information about federal and provincial vaping legislation at the links below:

- [Government of Canada: Vaping Acts and Regulations](#)
- [The Government of Saskatchewan: The Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act](#)

## SUGGESTED STRATEGIES

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To address the growing rates of youth vaping and the dangers associated, involvement of multi-sectoral partners and engagement of parents and communities is integral. Approaching the issue of vaping by using the four inter-related components of the Comprehensive School Health (CSCH) framework allows families, students and communities to work together to ensure that the school is a healthy environment to support student success.<sup>18</sup> The four inter-related components are:

- Effective policy
- Family and community engagement
- High-quality teaching and learning
- Healthy physical and social environment

## EFFECTIVE POLICY

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- Develop and/or review school division/school policy around vape usage in collaboration with the health and education sectors, families, youth, and community members.<sup>14</sup> Consider school-specific information from [The Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act](#).
- Administrators, educators, school staff, families and students should be familiar with school board policy, school division administrative procedure(s), school policies and procedures and the [Tobacco- and Vapour Products-Free Schools](#).
- Develop a communication and implementation plan.

## FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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- Provide informational opportunities for parents and community members such as community panels, or public awareness events, including relevant stakeholders. Work with the school community council to determine an approach that is right for your school.
- Provide parents and community members opportunities to ask questions and facilitate discussion between parents and students.

## HIGH-QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

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- Saskatchewan curricula provide the flexibility for teachers to incorporate topics such as vaping into existing curricular outcomes related to personal health and well-being. Problematic substance use prevention skills are introduced at developmentally appropriate stages in provincial health education curricula. See additional resources at the end of this fact sheet.
- When providing vaping education to youth, it is important to address the motivations to vape, responding to peer pressure, developing social media literacy skills, and providing alternative supports for stress relief.

## HEALTHY PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS

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- A 2020 study found that 53% of Canadian youth who vape have tried to quit with an average number of quit attempts being 4.184.
- It is important that cessation supports consider the student needs and circumstances, and are provided in a non-judgmental environment.
- Support students to make informed decisions and find resources in the community (e.g., primary care physician, counsellor).
- Create a list of quit support resources.
- Advocate for cognitive and behavioural therapy supports in schools and province wide.
- Work with youth to advocate for their own health.

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## CURRICULUM SUPPORTS FOR ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS ON VAPING

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kNOw Vaping

Saskatchewan Curriculum

Opportunities to Address Substance Misuse in Curriculum - search title in "search for resources"

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS ON VAPING

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### **Centre for Addictions and Mental Health**

Vaping: What elementary school educators need to know

Vaping: What secondary school educators need to know

### **Drug Free Kids Canada**

Youth and Vaping – a growing trend

Youth and Vaping - Information

### **Health Canada**

Consider the Consequences of Vaping

Talking with teens about vaping: Tip sheet

### **Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health**

Vaping Resource for Schools: Addressing Student Use of E-cigarettes and Other Vaping Products

### **Quit Supports**

Kids Help Phone

Quash App

Quit Now: Learn About Vaping

Smokers' Helpline

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