



Take Care of Your Body

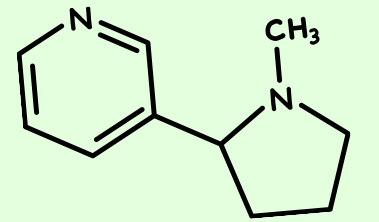
Why is Nicotine a Problem for Children?



- The brain is still developing the age of 25, making children more likely to become addicted to substances like nicotine
- The prefrontal cortex, responsible for decision-making and impulse control, matures last
- Children's brains are full of potential - learning, creativity and planning for the future

This leaflet summarises what your child will learn in You and Me NI Vape Free Lesson 1. It focuses on understanding what nicotine is, why it's harmful for young people, and how to make healthy choices.

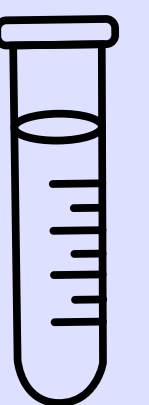
What is Nicotine?



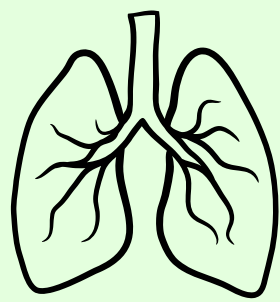
- Nicotine is a chemical found in tobacco plants
- It is a stimulant drug that is highly addictive
- It mimics natural chemicals like acetylcholine, disrupting brain signalling
- It hijacks the reward pathway, flooding the brain with dopamine and creating dependency

What's in an E-Cigarette

- E-cigarettes contain many chemicals, not just nicotine
- Some of these chemicals are also found in household products—things you wouldn't want to put in your mouth or body
- Breathing in these chemicals can harm the lungs, heart, and overall health



How Does Nicotine Affect the Body?



- Increases blood pressure and heart rate
- Causes blood vessel stiffness and clotting raising risk of heart disease, stroke, and heart attacks
- It destroys healthy lung cells
- Increases risk of asthma, lung disease, and lung cancer
- Can lead to collapsed lungs and vaper's lung

What Should Children Do If They Need Help?



- If your child or someone they know is using e-cigarettes and finds it hard to stop, they should talk to a trusted adult (parent, teacher, doctor, or counsellor)
- Children are encouraged to make a list of trusted adults they can go to for help or questions



Key Takeaways for Parents

- Nicotine and e-cigarettes are harmful to young, developing bodies and brains
- Open conversations at home help children feel safe to ask questions and make healthy choices
- Encourage your child to avoid trying e-cigarettes or tobacco products and to talk to you or another trusted adult if they have concerns