



American Heart Association®

Life's Essential 8™

→ for kids



# CLEAR THE AIR

Smoking or tobacco use of any form, including e-cigarettes is bad for your heart and your blood vessels, especially in kids.<sup>1</sup>

When we smoke, we breathe in smoke from cigarettes that have many dangerous chemicals inside it. Similarly, vaping devices produce vapor, which is like a cloud of tiny particles full of chemicals that are breathed in. These chemicals can hurt our bodies. Here are some reasons why smoking, including vaping, is bad for us:

- 1. Damages our lungs:** Our lungs are like balloons that help us breathe. Smoking can make our lungs dirty and weaker. It can cause coughing, wheezing, and make it harder to breath properly.
- 2. Harmful chemicals:** The vapor from vaping devices contains chemicals that can harm our bodies. These chemicals can cause damage to our lungs and other organs, even if they might taste or smell nice.
- 3. Harms our heart:** Our hearts are like superheroes that pump blood to all parts of our bodies. Smoking can damage our heart and blood vessels, making it harder for our heart to work properly, and increases the chances of having a heart attack or stroke.
- 4. Stains our teeth and makes us smell:** Smoking can turn our teeth yellow and give us bad breath. It can also make our clothes, hair, and even our rooms smell unpleasant.
- 5. Affects our sense of taste and smell:** Smoking can make our taste buds less sensitive, so we might not enjoy food as much as we should. It can also make it harder for us to smell things.
- 6. Can lead to addiction:** Smoking and vaping contains a substance called nicotine, which is very addictive. Once someone starts smoking, it can be very difficult to stop even though they know nicotine can hurt them.

It's important to know that smoking not only affects the person who smokes but also the people around them. Breathing in secondhand smoke from someone else's cigarette can also be harmful and make people sick. It's also important to remember that vaping is not a safe or healthy alternative to smoking.

It's best to stay away from smoking and not start this bad habit in the first place. Staying away from smoking and vaping is a great decision for our health and well-being. If you have any questions or want to know more, feel free to ask an adult you trust, like a parent, teacher, or doctor.

Learn more at [heart.org/lifes8](https://heart.org/lifes8)

<sup>1</sup>Impairment of Endothelial Function by Cigarette Smoke is not Caused by a Specific Smoke Constituent, but by Vagal Input from the Airway. Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis, and Vascular Biology. DOI: 10.1161/ATVBAHA.122.318051 Writing assistance for youth framing provided by ChatGPT.