



kNOw Vaping Fact Sheet

PURPOSE

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

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 smoking¹.

HOW DO VAPES WORK?

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 substances².

WHAT ARE THE CONCERNS WITH VAPING?

A [2018-2019 Survey](#) found that 90% of youth in Canada who vape were vaping with nicotine products³. Industries offer a range of nicotine levels in vape products and target youth through various flavours such as berry, mint, and mango⁴.

Children and youth are especially susceptible to the harmful effects of nicotine. Vaping nicotine can lead to impulse control issues and cognitive and behavioural problems⁵. Nicotine is highly addictive and can make it hard to quit vaping or smoking. Young people who vape nicotine have higher odds of transitioning to tobacco cigarettes which may lead to numerous health impacts⁶.

While nicotine is the most common substance found in vapes, youth have reported vaping other substances and drugs. In a 2019 Saskatchewan survey, youth across the province provided approximately 55 different examples of other substances that they vape^{5,7}. Health risks have been linked to chemicals found in vaping products and the long-term safety of inhaling chemicals in vaping products is not known⁵.

In 2019, the Canadian Tobacco and Nicotine Survey (CTNS) found that the prevalence of vaping cannabis was 11% for youth ages 15 to 19⁸. 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 15-19 years of age. The exact causes and chemicals associated with these types of injuries are still under investigation in Canada⁹.

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 issues¹⁰.

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, 42% of students believed that vaping with nicotine is of “great risk” while 14% perceived vaping without nicotine to be of “great risk”⁸.

VAPING IN SASKATCHEWAN

A [2018-19 survey](#) found that 48% of Saskatchewan students in grades 7-12 reported having tried e-cigarettes with most using nicotine containing vapes. Thirty percent of Saskatchewan youth in grades 7-12 had used an e-cigarette in the past 30 days. These vaping rates are higher for Saskatchewan than Canada³.

Canadian Student Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs Survey 2018-2019³

	Ever vaped	Ever vaped (with nicotine)	Last 30 day vape use
Saskatchewan	48%	41%	30%
Canada	34%	28%	20%

Among Canadian students in grades 7-12, of the 20% of students who reported using a vape in the past 30 days, 40% reported frequent or daily use of vapes³. In Canada, youth (ages 15-19 years) and young adults (ages 20-24 years) had higher rates of vaping than adults (ages 25+ years)⁸.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE INFLUENCES ON YOUTH VAPING RATES?

Studies found that motivations to vape among youth include curiosity, enjoyment, and to reduce stress⁸. In addition, a [2020 Heart and Stroke survey](#) found that peer and friend influence is a major factor for youth to start vaping⁴. This survey also found that social media exposure is an influence to start vaping⁴.

Due to the sleek and modern design of vapes, youth are able to easily hide vaping from parents and educators¹¹. Not only are vapes easy to hide, but youth reported they are also easy to acquire. More than half of the students surveyed in 2018-19 (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 one³.

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, over 40% indicated that they had never smoked a cigarette³. 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

In 2018-19, 65% of Canadian students grades 7-12 that had vaped in the last 30 days used social sources (e.g. friends and family) to get their vaping products³. These numbers were higher for grades 7-9 than grades 10-12. Over 25% 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 higher for grades 10-12 than grades 7-9³.

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)¹². As well, the Vaping Compliance and Enforcement Report conducted by Health Canada in 2019 revealed that upon inspection, 84% of vape shops and 14% of convenience stores were non-compliant to current regulations¹³.

Although federal regulations have set requirements to limit youth access of vapes through online shopping, studies show that these requirements can be circumvented^{12,14,15}. 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 months¹⁴.

LEGISLATION

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, vapour products are not allowed to be sold or given to individuals under 18 years of age¹⁶.

The Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act and regulations regulate the sale, display, promotion and use of vapour products in Saskatchewan¹⁷. 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 be 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

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 success¹⁸. The four inter-related components are:

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

EFFECTIVE POLICY

- Develop and/or review school division/school policy around vape usage in collaboration with the health and education sectors, families, youth, and community members¹⁴. 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

- 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

- 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.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS TO QUIT VAPING

- 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.

HEALTHY PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS

- Create physical spaces on school property (inside/outside) where youth feel comfortable congregating.
- Ensure that the social and physical culture of the school focuses on preventing problematic substance misuse by championing school community well-being initiatives.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Youth engagement is integral for tobacco and vaping awareness, prevention, and cessation initiatives, as well as policy advocacy. Youth4Change (Y4C) is a provincial youth group advocating for change in Saskatchewan. Y4C focuses on bringing awareness to vaping as well as policy advocacy across the province. Information for youth who may be interested in learning more or becoming involved can be found here: <https://www.lungsask.ca/school-zone/youth4change>

CURRICULUM SUPPORTS FOR ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS ON VAPING

[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

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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