

THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY HAS A KIDS MENU

FlavorsHookKids.org

THE RUNDOWN

The tobacco industry hooks kids on vaping by using fun flavors that spark curiosity and make tobacco taste good. That puts teens at risk for a lifetime of nicotine addiction, health problems, and permanent brain changes.

Here's what we know:

In the last 2 years, vaping increased by 218% among middle schoolers and 135% among high schoolers

97% of kids who vape use flavors

Teens are nearly 7x more likely to vape nicotine than adults

Marijuana vaping among youth increased by 58% in a single year

Use this guide to help you keep your kids safe from flavored tobacco and vaping. Share it with parents, school leaders, and other decision-makers. You'll find resources for helping teens quit, a list of telltale signs of vaping, and a visual guide to vape products. Get advice for talking to kids about vaping, find out how schools are combating the problem, and learn how to help your community fight back against the powerful tobacco industry.

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COVID-19

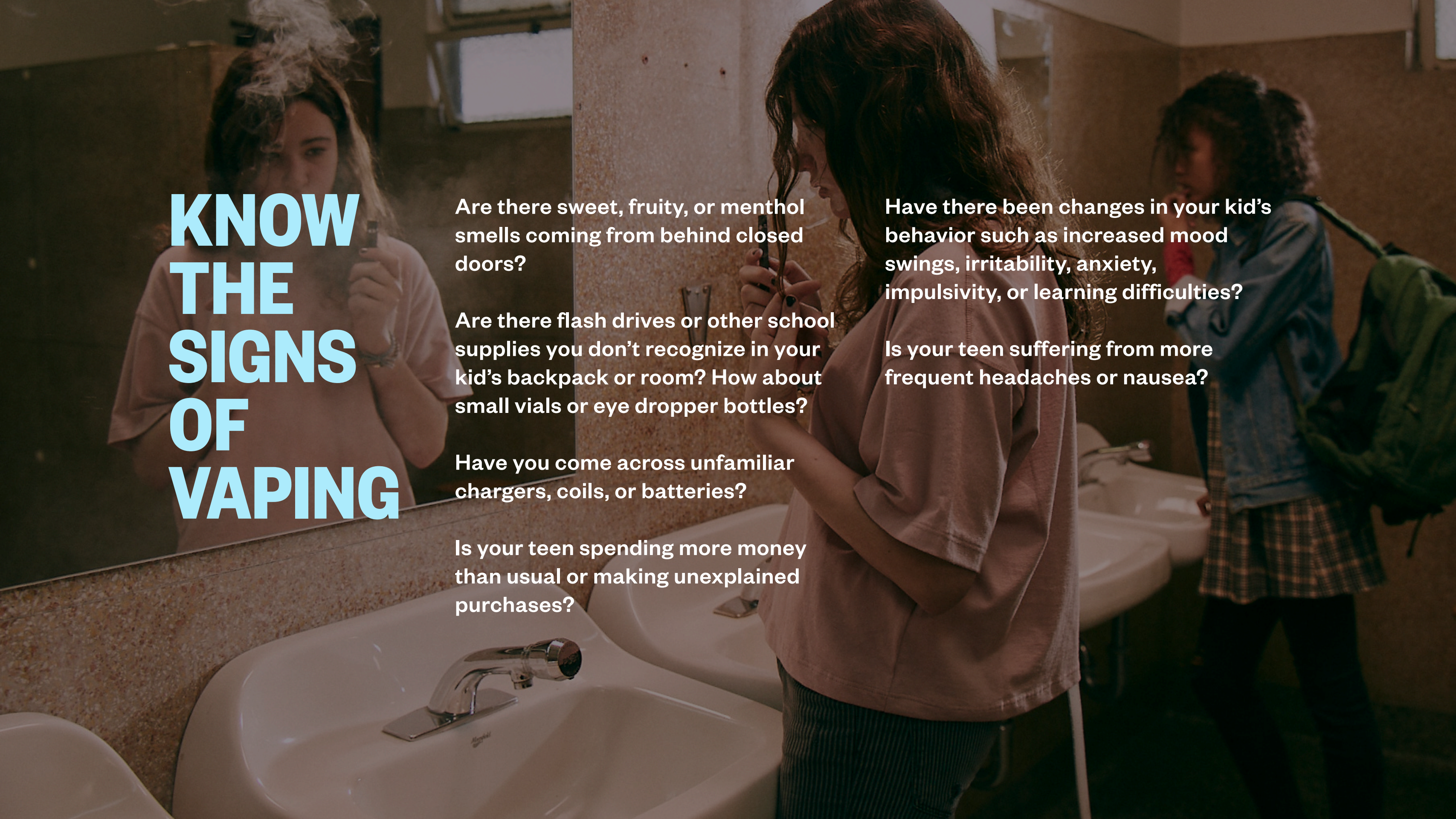
**LUNG HEALTH IS
CRUCIAL TO OUR
WELLBEING;
DISINFORMATION
IS CRUCIAL
TO INDUSTRY
PROFITS.**

Last fall the lung illness outbreak, EVALI, hospitalized many young people and tragically took lives. A new threat to the lungs, COVID-19, has proven fatal in staggering numbers. What can we learn from this? Our lungs are delicate organs. Vaping and smoking weakens lung function and immunity. When a threat arises, like COVID-19, people who vape and smoke may face greater risk of serious illness. The National Institute on Drug Abuse included vapers among the most vulnerable groups, which turns a spotlight on youth as they are 7x more likely to vape nicotine than adults.

There have been calls for the tobacco industry to phase out sales of cigarettes and vaping products during this global pandemic. But so far they haven't. They're still marketing and profiting on kid-friendly vape flavors like Cotton Candy and Blue Razz, while people in nearly every country of the world suffer a serious lung illness that costs lives.

In the face of this pandemic, when we're all looking out for the greater good, let's remember that the tobacco industry sells a product with no known benefits to the world's population, only harm. And too often, that harm is fatal. Not only that, they ran disinformation campaigns for decades, lying to people for their own profit. Our aim is to be a place where Californians get factual health information they need to keep teens safe and healthy despite ongoing threats from the tobacco industry.

[Get an update from UC Davis's Dr. Tong on how smoking and vaping can lead to COVID-19 complications. >](#)

A young woman with long brown hair is standing in a school bathroom, looking down at a small electronic device (likely a vape) she is holding in her hands. She is wearing a light-colored t-shirt. In the background, another student with a backpack is visible near a sink. The scene is dimly lit, with a mirror reflecting the woman's face.

KNOW THE SIGNS OF VAPING

Are there sweet, fruity, or menthol smells coming from behind closed doors?

Are there flash drives or other school supplies you don't recognize in your kid's backpack or room? How about small vials or eye dropper bottles?

Have you come across unfamiliar chargers, coils, or batteries?

Is your teen spending more money than usual or making unexplained purchases?

Have there been changes in your kid's behavior such as increased mood swings, irritability, anxiety, impulsivity, or learning difficulties?

Is your teen suffering from more frequent headaches or nausea?

WHAT IF MY TEEN IS ADDICTED?

CALL OR TEXT A HELPLINE

The [No Vape chat line](#) connects your kid (or you) to a trained counselor. Text NoVapes to 66819 or call 1-844-8-NO-VAPE/1-844-866-8273.

[My Life My Quit](#) connects kids with a supportive, knowledgeable coach. Text Start My Quit to 1-855-891-9989 or call.

DOWNLOAD AN APP

[This Is Quitting](#) is text-message support app for teens. Text DITCHJUUL to 88709.

[Smoke Free Teen](#) has tools for quitting, including what to expect during the first few days.

ENLIST THE PEDIATRICIAN

Ask your pediatrician to talk about vaping with your teen. Doctors often explain things in a way kids will listen.

BE SUPPORTIVE

Quitting is hard. As many nicotine addicts and recovering addicts will tell you, it usually takes more than one try. Keep encouraging and empathizing with your teen. Reward the incremental progress and accept the setbacks as part of the process.

AN FDA POLICY WITH A DANGEROUS LOOPHOLE

The youth vaping epidemic finally prompted FDA action. Victory? Not by a long shot. Pressure from the tobacco industry created a dangerous loophole that lets kids continue to get vapes in thousands of flavors.

FDA POLICY DOES NOT ALLOW:

Any pre-filled flavored vape pods that snap into vapes like Juul pods, except for menthol or tobacco flavors.

FDA POLICY CONTINUES TO ALLOW:

All refillable flavored vapes, like Suorin and Smok.

All single-use disposable flavored vapes, like Puff Bar.

Pre-filled menthol and tobacco-flavored pods.

And kids may be able to buy pre-filled flavored products, like Juul pods, in the future. That's because manufacturers still can apply for FDA approval to sell their products.

KIDS CAN STILL GET THESE VAPES

Despite the FDA flavors policy, vapes are still available to kids in these three forms.

THE BREAKDOWN

How can the industry still sell flavored disposable vapes?

The FDA restricts pre-filled flavored pods. Single-use disposable vapes don't have pods. So Puff Bar, Posh, and other disposables sail right through the loophole onto shelves. The tobacco industry is free to market high-potency nicotine in kid-friendly flavors for as little as ten bucks a pop. No surprise they're now trending in schools.

How did Juul get off easy?

They phased out the flavors that eventually became restricted. Did Juul benefit from being partly owned and operated by Big Tobacco giant, Altria, giving them access to seasoned lobbyists? It's possible. What's certain is that the vape widely seen as the culprit of the epidemic is largely unaffected by the FDA's flavors policy.

Pre-Filled Pod Vapes



JUUL

PHIX

Refillable Vapes



SUORIN
DROP

VAPE
PEN

Single-Use Disposable Vapes



PUFF
BAR

POSH
VAPE

TIPS FOR TALKING WITH TEENS

LISTEN

Whether or not your kids have tried vaping, they'll benefit from a good talk. And a good talk starts with listening. Let the kids tell you what it's like to be surrounded by teens who vape. These starter questions are a simple way in:

Do you have friends who vape?

Are you curious about it?

Have you been offered a vape?

Have you tried it?

If so, what made you say yes?

If not, what made you say no?

As kids move through middle and high school, they'll face new challenges. Support them every step of the way by keeping the conversation going. Did you ever feel pressured to smoke? You could talk about your experience, including how hard it was for you to quit. An open dialogue is far more effective than one big lecture.

BLAME FLAVORS

How has vaping grown so fast? Blame flavors. 97% of kids who vape report using flavors. Most say flavors are why they use vapes. No surprise, since fun flavors trick kids into thinking vaping is harmless. Yet the chemicals the tobacco industry uses to create those flavors may damage your lungs, too. Some flavors may increase the likelihood of addiction by messing with dopamine, the brain's "feel-good" chemical. Help kids understand that by hooking them on flavors, the tobacco industry profits.

TALK SCIENCE

The main things kids (and adults) know about nicotine is that it's addictive. But addiction is only the beginning. Teens should understand that nicotine is brain poison. It changes the way connections form in the brain, making it harder for kids to learn and pay attention. As if teen years weren't hard enough, nicotine can also increase anxiety, mood swings, and irritability. Getting hooked on nicotine puts kids at risk for addiction to other substances, too.

LEARN MORE

Visit [PAVe](#) (Parents Against Vaping e-cigs) for a fact-filled toolkit and links to helpful websites and videos.

Use Stanford's [anti-vaping toolkit](#) to get downloadable presentations, worksheets, and activity guides.

Get the California Department of Education's [e-cigarette toolkit](#).

Learn from the American Heart Association partnership about the tobacco industry's [insidious role in hooking kids](#).

Get tips from the U.S. Surgeon General on [how to talk to your kids](#) about vaping.

BE PREPARED FOR EXCUSES

Kids are getting a ton of misinformation about vaping online.

Here's how parents can respond to some common excuses.

KID:

It's not mine.

KID:

Vaping is safer than smoking.

KID:

Nicotine's just a little buzz.

KID:

It's not nicotine. It's just water and flavors.

ADULT:

I hope it's not yours, but I get that you might be tempted to try vaping. I'm worried because vaping can be addictive and can change the way your brain works. Plus, I know the tobacco industry makes vapes that look like flash drives so they're easy to hide. It's not that I don't trust you, but you should know that I'm paying attention.

ADULT:

There's actually nothing safe about vaping. It's not water vapor like some people think. The vapor is actually aerosol that contains metals, particulates, and toxic chemicals. And many vapes use nicotine salts rather than regular nicotine. Salts are inhaled more easily and absorbed faster than regular nicotine.

ADULT:

Nicotine does release a chemical called dopamine in the brain, which might make you feel good temporarily. But don't be tricked. Nicotine is a neurotoxin, which means it's a poison that affects the brain. When you're young and your brain is still developing, nicotine can do lasting, even permanent, damage.

ADULT:

You're not alone. It's not obvious to kids, or even grownups, that something that tastes minty, fruity, or sweet is actually an addictive drug that can have long-term effects on a kid's developing brain. The chemicals the tobacco industry uses to create those flavors may damage your lungs, too.

WHAT SCHOOLS ARE DOING ABOUT THE PROBLEM

The tobacco industry targets teens, which puts teachers and administrators on the frontlines of protecting kids. Schools should be focused on teaching, but they're having to do a whole lot of policing, too. Here are some of the many ways schools are addressing the vaping crisis.

ADMINISTRATORS

Adopting a tobacco-free policy that includes e-cigarettes in the definition of "tobacco product" and laying out enforcement and other implementation procedures.

Sharing resources such as this printable guide or FlavorsHookKids.org with administrators to spread the word on school Facebook pages, websites, or in email announcements to parents.

STAFF

Educating teachers, counselors, nurses, coaches, custodians, and other staff so they know what the different e-cigarette/vaping products look like. These devices are changing all the time.

Posting "No tobacco" signs and announcing reminders at sporting events and other gatherings.

STUDENTS

Engaging students in media literacy to counter the tobacco industry's influence.

Encouraging kids to visit the nurse/wellness counselor at school for quitting resources like helplines (1-844-8-NO-VAPE) and apps (thisisquitting.com).

PARENTS

Hosting informational parent nights featuring public health experts, local doctors, and law enforcement representatives.

Enlisting the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) to adopt an anti-vaping resolution; host educational sessions or activities about vaping; host educational forums for parents, students, and community members; and improve campus security with more frequent monitoring of locations where students vape. Be sure to attend to voice your concerns.

HELP KIDS UNCOVER THE FACTS

When it comes to learning the facts about vaping, help kids figure it out their way.

GOOGLE IT

Teens are digital natives, and a quick Google search will show them how the tobacco industry has marketed vapes to kids. Seeing how Juul and other companies set out to trick kids into vaping might trigger your teen's BS radar.

If you're going to lead the exercise with your kid, do some reading yourself first. Start with this article: [Juul bought ads on Cartoon Network, other youth sites, suit says](#). Or [download this PDF](#) from Stanford researchers so you can see what Juul was up to from the very beginning.

Use the PDF to point out the following marketing tricks to kids:

Youthful models
Their body language
Their outfits
Sex appeal
The colorful, trendy backgrounds
Hashtags all over social media
Juul's presence at music fests
Juul's free sampling events

Ask teens to decide for themselves who they think Juul was trying to reach. Chances are, they'll spot the hypocrisy in a flash.

HISTORY REPEATING

Teens (and adults) might be surprised to learn the tobacco industry has a decades-long history of trying to market to kids. In the 70s, the federal government mandated that cigarette commercials be taken off the air. In the 90s, the cartoon "Joe Camel" was abolished. In 2009, flavored cigarettes (except menthol) were federally banned. And in 2019, new restrictions were put in place by the FDA, albeit with [dangerous loopholes](#). Visit the [Smithsonian site](#) to give teens a glimpse of the past and to show them how the e-cig industry is using Big Tobacco's playbook.

BIG KIDS UNITE

Maybe teens want a shot at impacting the epidemic themselves. With more and more kids vaping, high schoolers could model safe behavior. Connect with California's [Friday Night Live](#) for ideas on how teens can tackle this health topic. Or have teens reach out to their school administrators or counselors for other ways to get involved. It could be a science or health project, or it could be applied to community service hours. Ask your teens if they'd be up for putting their leadership skills to work for California's greater good.

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