



Smokeless Tobacco Alternatives: Electronic Cigarettes

What are electronic cigarettes?

Electronic cigarettes, also called e-cigarettes or personal vaporizers, are battery-powered devices that allow users to inhale harmful chemicals via vaporized nicotine solutions. The vapor emitted by e-cigarettes provides a similar flavor and physical sensation to that of inhaled tobacco smoke. However, no smoke or combustion is actually involved when using an electronic cigarette.

E-cigarettes often resemble traditional cigarettes, cigars and pipes. Many versions of this device are reusable and include interchangeable nicotine solution cartridges. Recently, disposable e-cigarettes have been introduced to the market.

Are electronic cigarettes helpful tools for smoking cessation?

Manufacturers of electronic cigarettes claim that the devices are effective in helping people quit smoking. This claim is false! The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) routinely studies and regulates smoking cessation products, and has not concluded that e-cigarettes are an effective quitting strategy. In 2009, the FDA issued a notice discouraging consumers from purchasing and using e-cigarettes.

What federal regulations apply to electronic cigarettes?

On September 9, 2010, the FDA announced that it had taken enforcement action against five electronic cigarette companies for violations of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, including unsubstantiated claims and poor manufacturing practices.



The FDA also sent a letter to the Electronic Cigarette Association stating that the agency intends to regulate electronic cigarettes in a manner consistent with its mission of protecting the public health.

Why are these devices dangerous?

Electronic cigarettes are dangerous health hazards because:

- Available nicotine solutions, also known as “e-liquid” or “e-juice,” contain cancer causing agents and numerous toxic chemicals.
- According to a recent FDA study, in some instances the nicotine levels advertised for the solution cartridges are inaccurate. Some cartridges which are labeled “nicotine-free” have actually been found to contain traces of nicotine.
- They appeal to youth because of their design and sweet flavorings such as strawberry, vanilla and caramel.
- They do not carry appropriate health warning labels.
- Compared with conventional cigarettes, e-cigarettes can sustain from 150-300 puffs — the equivalent of 1/2 to 1 pack of cigarettes.