

# Electronic cigarettes

## Electronic cigarettes...what are they?

E-cigarettes come in many different forms and most function in a similar manner. A battery powered filament or wick, when ignited, heats and vaporizes oil which can be inhaled similar to cigarette smoke. While it appears to produce smoke, it is in fact vapor which dissipates quickly.



Most e-cigarettes are long plastic tubes (approximately 8 -12 cm) that contain a small reservoir for the oil and a burning chamber that contains a small wick. A button on the tube is pressed and a small battery provides power causing the wick to heat and vaporize the oil. Most basic e-cigarettes can be purchased for \$10 - \$15, while more expensive forms look just like conventional cigarettes and can cost up to \$50.

The oils used to produce the vapor come in many different flavors, from coffee and vanilla to tobacco. Nicotine-based oils are not yet sold in Canada; however, they are readily available in the U.S. and can be purchased on-line in a variety of different strengths.



## Why are they popular?

E-cigarettes have been claimed as an aid to reduce or replace smoking. However, these claims have been refuted by Health Canada and the Canadian Lung Association.

## What are the concerns?

- Elementary-aged children are able to buy e-cigs.
- E-cigs are becoming an acceptable social habit with potential to lead to actual smoking.
- The U.S. Center for Disease Control reports that the majority of teens who use e-cigs have never tried tobacco despite the device being touted as a way to quit smoking.
- Young people have put both alcohol and THC (the active ingredient in marijuana) into the e-cig oil.
- E-cigs contain chemicals such as propylene glycol which could be inhaled or could pose health risks to others (second hand smoke).

As with regular cigarettes, the Surrey School District discourages e-cigarettes and does not permit their use on school property. If an e-cigarette is used on school property, the appropriate school procedures and responses would be applied.