



POSITION STATEMENT E-cigarettes & Oral Health

Emerging evidence indicates that e-cigarette use (vaping) can be harmful to oral health. Research has linked e-cigarette use with mouth and throat irritation, traumatic injuries to the mouth, changes in gum health and oral bacteria, increased risk of tooth decay, and poorer self-reported oral health.^{1 2 3 4 5}

There is evidence that using e-cigarettes acts as a gateway to tobacco smoking. E-cigarette users are three times more likely to take up tobacco smoking⁶ – a known risk factor for oral diseases including oral cancer and gum disease.

E-cigarettes contain up to 200 toxic chemicals including some known carcinogens and others included in paint thinner, weed killer and bug spray. Some e-cigarette liquids also taste sweet making them attractive to children and young adults.

New data shows almost double the number of Victorian adults reported vaping in 2022 compared to 2018-19.⁷ Young Victorians aged 18-30 make up the largest proportion of current e-cigarette users. Among the NSW teens surveyed in 2022, one third (32%) had vaped at least a few puffs of an e-cigarette. Of those who had vaped, more than half had never smoked cigarettes prior to vaping.⁸

Without urgent strengthened regulation and enforcement of laws, the use of e-cigarettes will have a devastating effect on the oral and general health of Australians, exposing more people to a potential life-long nicotine addiction.

The oral health and public health communities are aligned in their position that e-cigarettes pose a serious risk to oral health, along with the growing evidence of the associations between e-cigarette use and general health harms.



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We call for:

- A stop on the unlawful importation of e-cigarettes, regardless of whether they contain nicotine, unless bound for retail pharmacy or individuals with a medical prescription from a doctor.
- A stop to the marketing and promotion of e-cigarettes, especially to children, both online and offline.
- The introduction of a retail licensing scheme in Victoria to help identify, deter and penalise retailers breaking the law by selling harmful e-cigarettes to minors and adults.
- Investment in research to better understand the impact of e-cigarettes on oral health, particularly among young people and other priority populations.
- Investment to investigate how existing and planned public health campaigns on vaping can include oral health messages or whether a standalone oral health campaign is needed to educate and support children, young adults, parents and educators.

Position statement by Dental Health Services Victoria and endorsed by the Australian Dental Association Victorian Branch, La Trobe University, and The University of Melbourne.



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References

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