

THUNDER BAY DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT

Vaping Prevention Education Kit

NOVEMBER 2025



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 Thunder Bay District
Health Unit

Table of Contents

Why Vaping is an Issue	2
Online Resources for Educators to Build their Knowledge	4
Resources and Activities for Students	5
Grade 4 – 5	5
Grade 6 – 8	6
Grade 9 – 12	7
Myths & Facts	8
Agree & Disagree	10
Aerosol/Water Demonstration	14
Cessation Resources	15

Goal of the Vaping Prevention Education Kit

To provide educators with information and resources in order to implement vaping prevention activities within their classrooms.



**THIS KIT
CONTAINS**

- 1** Kit guide
- 2** Activities and facilitation instructions
- 3** Supplies to implement activities in guide
- 4** Posters, factsheets, announcements

Why Vaping is an Issue



While youth smoking rates are at an all time low, youth vaping has quickly gained popularity.

Vaping is highly addictive, can harm the developing brain and increase the risk for future addiction to other drugs.

Youth vaping rates are significantly higher in NW Ontario compared to the provincial average.

In Northwestern Ontario, grade 7 to 12 students



12%
reported
smoking tobacco
cigarettes
in the past month



22%
reported
vaping
in the past month

(COMPASS, 2024-2025)

In Ontario, grade 7 to 12 students



3%
smoking
tobacco cigarettes
in the past year



13%
vaping
at least once in
the past year

1 in 9

11%
vaping
in the past month

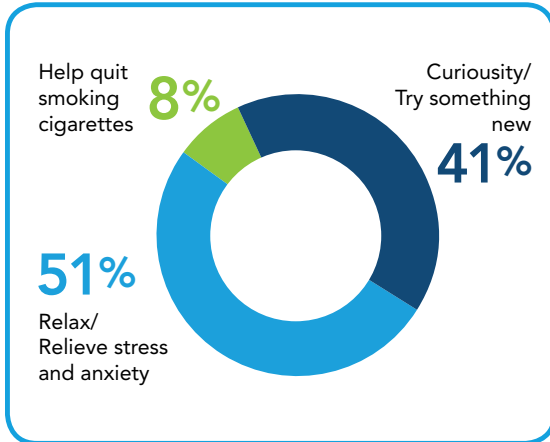
1 in 4

25%
vaping
in their lifetime

(OSDUHS, 2023)

Reported Students Vaping in the Last 30 Days

Percentage of students reported vaping for various reasons (current users) in Northwestern Ontario Region, COMPASS 2024-2025



Children & Youth are more likely to develop a **nicotine dependence**, even with limited exposure

Vaping has Both Physical and Mental Health Risks Affecting

may worsen symptoms of depression and anxiety

memory

concentration

reduced impulse control

attention

learning

Short-term Effects of Vaping on Youth Include



mouth or throat irritation



shortness of breath



dizziness and nausea



cough

Learn more at NotAnExperiment.ca

Online Resources for Educators to Build their Knowledge



1 Not an Experiment Resources

Not An Experiment Educators Page
<https://www.notanexperiment.ca/educators/>

2 Health Canada Self Led Modules

<https://healthcanadaexperiences.ca/programs/consider-the-consequences-of-vaping/>

Resources and Activities for Students

Grade 4–5

Lesson Plans

1. Hamilton Public Health Grade 5 Curriculum

<https://www.hamilton.ca/sites/default/files/2023-11/healthyschools-Grade-5-Substance-Use-Curriculum-2023.pdf>

2. Stanford Modules for Tobacco and Nicotine Education

<https://med.stanford.edu/tobaccopreventiontoolkit/you-and-me-together-vape-free-curriculum/es-lesson-1-take-care-of-your-body-elementary.html>

Classroom Activities

3. **Aerosol/Water Demonstration** (refer to page 14)

4. **Myths & Facts** (refer to page 8)

Grade 6–8

Lesson Plans

1. Hamilton Public Health Grade 6-8 Curriculum

<https://www.hamilton.ca/sites/default/files/2023-11/healthyschools-Grade-6-Substance-Use-Curriculum-2023.pdf>

<https://www.hamilton.ca/sites/default/files/2023-11/healthyschools-Grade-7-Substance-Use-Curriculum-2023.pdf>

<https://www.hamilton.ca/sites/default/files/2023-11/healthyschools-Grade-8-Substance-Use-Curriculum-2023.pdf>

Classroom Activities

2. Ask students to explore Not an Experiment Website and then facilitate the Kahoot Game

» Not an Experiment – <https://www.notanexperiment.ca/>

» NAE Kahoot Games – <https://www.baamboozle.com/game/2314607>

3. Options to offer Online game or Teacher facilitated (in-kit) game.

» Escape room (NAE) – <https://www.notanexperiment.ca/educators/>

4. Refusal Skills Activities from NAE

<https://www.notanexperiment.ca/resisting-pressure-to-vape/>

5. Health Canada Self-Led Modules and Activities

<https://healthcanadaexperiences.ca/programs/consider-the-consequences-of-vaping/>

6. Aerosol/Water Demonstration (refer to page 14)

7. Agree & Disagree (refer to page 10)

Grade 9–12

Classroom Activities

1. Take the Clouds Outside (NAE)
<https://www.notanexperiment.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Take-the-Clouds-Outside-Activity.pdf>
2. Ask students to explore Not an Experiment website and then facilitate the Kahoot Game
 - » Not an Experiment – <https://www.notanexperiment.ca/>
 - » NAE Kahoot Games – <https://www.baamboozle.com/game/2314764>
3. VIBED (Vaping Information for Better Educated Decisions) Workshop
<https://stopvapingchallenge.ca/home/educators/>

Other Resources to Explore

4. Truth – testimonials, toxic therapy from your vape, breath of stress air
<https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/emerging-tobacco-products/new-truth-campaign-shows-connection-between-nicotine>
<https://www.thetruth.com/hot-topic/quitting-stories>
5. Unfiltered Facts
<http://unfilteredfacts.ca/vaping/>
6. QUASH Resources
<https://www.quashapp.com/why-quit>
7. Sample Quit Kit (fidget toys, gum/mints, youth cessation services info)

Myths & Facts

Grade 4-5

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Identify 3 corners of the room and label each with one of the following signs: Myth, Fact, Not Sure
2. Ensure students know the difference between Myth and Fact.
 - a. Myth = information that might be shared but is NOT TRUE (like a rumour).
 - b. Fact = something that is proven to be TRUE.
3. Read the following statements, one at a time.
4. After each statement is read, give students time to move to the corner they think is correct.
5. Allow a few students to provide their reasons for choosing the corner they did and allow students to change corners before the answer is revealed.
6. Read the answer and additional information provided before moving onto the next statement.

STATEMENTS AND EXPLANATIONS:

1. **Nicotine is the addictive chemical in cigarettes and most vapes.**
FACT: *Nicotine comes from the tobacco plant and is found in cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco and most vapes. When people start using nicotine, it changes their brain and the more they use it, the more they feel like they need it.*
2. **Vaping is harmful.**
FACT: *Vaping can cause breathing problems and make it difficult to pay attention and remember things. These changes can affect important activities like sports and school. Vaping can also lead to addiction which can lead to more problems in your daily life.*
3. **It's hard for kids to get addicted to vaping.**
MYTH: *When nicotine is introduced to a brain that's still growing, it changes the chemistry! It fools the brain into feeling so good, nothing else feels good without the drug. You are more likely to become addicted to drugs like nicotine when you are young and your brain is still developing. Kids can get addicted to nicotine at lower levels that it would take for an adult, making it quicker and easier for them to become addicted. Some vapes have more nicotine in them than you would find in **500 cigarettes!***
4. **People addicted to nicotine can stop vaping or smoking any time they want to.**
MYTH: *When people are addicted to nicotine, stopping smoking or vaping can be really difficult...even though they know it is causing problems in their life and they want to stop.*

5. The best way to not get addicted to nicotine, is to never start smoking, vaping or using any kind of nicotine product.

FACT: Most adults who smoke started when they were teenagers. They didn't think they would get addicted, or about any of the problems it could cause for their future...and once you start, it can be REALLY hard to stop. Nicotine is a very addictive drug and kids can get addicted quickly. The best way to avoid nicotine addiction, is to never start vaping or smoking in the first place.

6. Vaping doesn't do anything bad to your lungs, heart or body. It's just as safe as breathing air.

MYTH: *The chemicals in vapes hurt your lungs. They irritate and damage your lungs and airways. Because they damage your airways, your body also has a harder time trying to heal when you become sick! In addition to harming the lungs, vaping can hurt your heart. Breathing in the aerosol from a vape, even if you're not the one using it, is bad for the heart. Now, the heart can't pump blood properly through the body and into the brain! This makes it harder to do fun activities like dancing or playing sports or singing.*

7. When people vape, they are breathing in lots of nasty chemicals that can harm them.

FACT: *The cloud that people breathe in (and out) when they vape contains many chemicals such as nicotine, metals like nickel and lead, and other harmful chemicals like formaldehyde. These chemicals cause addiction, damage the lungs and may cause cancer.*

8. The Vaping Industry (the companies that design and make vapes) try really hard to make sure their products do not appeal to youth.

MYTH: *Vape companies try to trick kids into thinking that vaping is safe, healthy, cool and fun. They do this by using colors, technology, packaging, flavours, and messaging to attract youth. These companies have found huge success in social media marketing and will use sites like Instagram, Snapchat, and even Tik Tok!*

9. Vape companies have no reason to try to hook kids on their products.

MYTH: *Vape companies want you to get hooked on their products so you get addicted and buy more throughout your whole life. They care about making money, not about keeping kids safe and healthy.*

10. Vaping is not a good or healthy way to deal with stress.

FACT: *Everyone feels stress sometimes. Some people think vaping, smoking or using other drugs helps them feel better. Remember, it's ok to be stressed, but drugs don't help in the long run, they actually make stress worse! Vaping nicotine can trick your brain into thinking it feels better for a short time, but those stressful feelings will come back! The more you vape to feel better, the more your body will want to vape. It just gets you more addicted. Instead of vaping to feel better, find other healthy ways to clear your head and make your body feel good. Could discuss with the class what kind of healthy activities make your mind and body feel good.*

Agree & Disagree

Grade 6–8

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Identify 3 corners of the room and label each with one of the following signs: Agree, Disagree, Not Sure
2. Read the following statements, one at a time.
3. After each statement is read, give students time to move to the corner that reflects how they feel.
4. Allow a few students to provide their reasons for choosing the corner they did and then read the additional information provided.
5. Before moving on to the next statement, give students an opportunity to change their corner if their perspective has changed with the new information.

STATEMENTS AND EXPLANATIONS:

1. Vaping is safe.

DISAGREE - Scientists around the world are working to better understand the health effects of vaping. Research is starting to show that exposure to nicotine and other chemicals in e-cigarette can damage the lungs and that this damage is similar to damage cause by smoking cigarettes.

Particles found in e-cigarette vapour can worsen existing lung conditions, make it hard to breathe and cause ear, eye and throat irritation. Vaping can also increase the risk of having a heart attack. When heated, propylene glycol and vegetable glycerin (found in e-liquid) can produce chemicals like formaldehyde, which are known to cause cancer. Among youth in the US, there have been hundreds of reported cases and even deaths from severe lung disease associated with using e-cigarette products. The first Canadian case was reported in Ontario in September 2019.

2. Vapes don't have nicotine.

CAN BE BOTH - While it is possible to buy e-liquids that don't contain nicotine, most e-cigarette products have nicotine in them making them extremely addictive. Up until you are about 25 years old it is easier for you to become addicted to nicotine than an older person. That's because your brain is still developing and is affected differently by the nicotine. Nicotine going to your brain also affect your memory, your ability to concentrate and your behaviour, making it harder for you to control impulses. If you become addicted to nicotine when you are young, it can also affect your chances of developing other drug addictions.

3. The tobacco industry targets youth to get them to vape.

AGREE - This statement is true. E-cigarettes and e-liquids have been marketed using many of the same methods that big tobacco used to convince people that cigarettes were safe and cool to smoke. They have even developed e-liquids in fruit and dessert flavours to hide the chemicals and nicotine and make them smell and taste good. Who wouldn't think strawberry was healthy, right?

4. Vaping is just harmless water vapour.

DISAGREE - There actually isn't any water in e-liquid. What are you inhaling is an aerosol that contains fine particles and chemicals. In the short term, these particles can make it difficult to breathe if you have lung problems. They can also cause ear, eye and throat irritation. Over time the metal parts of e-cigarette devices can break down and also become part of the aerosol that you inhale.

5. If you vape, you may be more likely to start smoking cigarettes.

AGREE - Research is finding that youth who vape may be more likely to switch to cigarette once they are addicted to nicotine. This is scary thought because we know that cigarettes cause cancers and other diseases and we don't know what vaping might do in long term. So you are taking big risks if you vape or if you smoke cigarettes.

6. Vaping is a good way for people to cope with feelings of stress and anxiety.

DISAGREE - Youth may turn to vaping to try to deal with stress or anxiety without realizing that nicotine addiction and vaping can cause more stress and make anxiety worse. When a person gets used to having nicotine and then stops using it, their brain sends signals to their body that feel really uncomfortable (and stressful!), to let them know it wants more nicotine! This creates a cycle of nicotine dependence where people use nicotine to get rid of their stressful feelings, but after they stop for a while, the stress returns...so they use again. These stressful and uncomfortable feelings are called nicotine withdrawal symptoms.

To properly deal with stress, you have to address the real reason that's causing you to feel this way. If it's out of your control, then you can try to feel better by talking to someone you trust, doing something healthy that you enjoy (listening to music, playing a game, talking to friends, etc), practice deep breathing (inhale really deeply, hold then exhale slowly), go outdoors and focus on nature, go for a walk...What do you like to do that makes you feel better when you are stressed?

7. Frantically looking for your vape because you feel the need to bring it with you or feeling like you need to vape in order to feel “normal,” are early signs of addiction.

AGREE - Some early signs of vaping dependence may include frantically looking for your vaping device because you feel the need to bring it with you, needing to use it in order to feel “normal,” and prioritizing buying vapes over other necessities.

Here are some other signs that vaping is becoming problematic (a really big issue):

- skipping important stuff like school, activities or other responsibilities to vape
- spending more money on vape stuff so you don't have enough money for other things like getting food or going to the movies
- feeling not as good physically (frequent coughing, harder to breath, harder to run or play for as long as you used to)
- feeling not as good mentally (more stress from having to hide vaping or from cravings/ withdrawal, distracted by thoughts of vaping, not able to concentrate or focus when you can't vape, moodiness, irritability, more stress, anxiety or depressed than before you started vaping)
- feeling like it would be hard to stop vaping for good
- feeling angry or sad when you can't vape

It's smart to notice these signs and think about getting some help (for yourself or a friend), or talking to someone who can help you out.

8. There are apps and services available to help youth who want to stop vaping.

AGREE - There are school, community and online resources available for youth who may need a little extra help to stop vaping. The first step is to talk to someone about it – any trusted adult at home (parent, older sibling, other family member or family friend), school or in the community (coach, youth program leader, youth worker, etc).

School resources: Tell a teacher or another trusted adult at school. They can help to connect you with the right person or service for you. (If your school has a social worker, guidance counselor, or other contact you would refer to – please include information here)

Community resources: You or a trusted adult can contact the Thunder Bay District Health Unit to explore options available in our communities. There may be a health unit program or another community program available to provide the support needed.

E-resources: There are free apps and online or phone supports available that can help you set goals, create a plan just for you and help you monitor your progress.

- [Quashapp.com](https://www.quashapp.com)
- [StopVapingChallenge.ca](https://www.stopvapingchallenge.ca)
- [NotAnExperiment.ca/quitting](https://www.notanexperiment.ca/quitting)

Access 'Stop Vaping Your Way' posters here to promote these cessation apps to youth in your school: <https://www.notanexperiment.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/stop-vaping-your-way-8.5-11-compressed.pdf>

Kids Help Phone – has online, phone, or text support available 24/7

Need help now?

Start a confidential conversation with a real person you can trust: 1-800-668-6868

TEXT 686868

If you would like to order posters/wallet cards/stickers to promote Kids Help Phone to students, request online: <https://kidshelpphone.ca/get-involved/programs-resources/order-youth-materials/>

9. In Ontario, it is illegal to share a vape with anyone under 19 years old.

AGREE - The Smoke-Free Ontario Act (SFOA), 2017 is the law in Ontario that sets the rules to keep places in Ontario smoke and vape-free and safe for everyone, especially young people. It also makes it harder for people to buy and use these harmful products.

It is illegal under the SFOA, 2017 to supply commercial tobacco products (like cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, etc), and vapes to anyone under 19 years of age. This includes underage friends sharing products or parents giving products to their kids. It is also illegal to privately sell these products, even to a friend. Breaking these laws could result in a \$490 fine.

It is also illegal under the SFOA, 2017 to smoke or vape in public areas within 20m of school property 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This means a person must be 2 school bus lengths away from the edge of school property before smoking or vaping. Breaking this law could result in a fine of \$305.00.

10. If your friends start vaping, you have to vape too or you won't be able to hang out anymore.

DISAGREE - It's totally okay to have different preferences than your friends! If they start vaping and you don't want to, that's completely fine. Real friends respect your choices and won't pressure you into doing something you're not comfortable with. Hanging out shouldn't be dependent on whether or not you vape. You can always find other things to do together that everyone enjoys, like playing games, watching movies, or going for a walk. Remember, it's important to stay true to yourself and make decisions that are right for you and your health. You can find some different ways to resist vaping on the Not An Experiment website: <https://www.notanexperiment.ca/resisting-pressure-to-vape/>

What would you say if a friend wanted you to try vaping? (Ask for volunteers to share their ideas).

Aerosol/Water Demonstration

MATERIALS:

- » Spray bottle with water - Aerosol bottle with hairspray

TERMINOLOGY:

- » Vapour is the term for a substance in the gas stage (e.g. water vapour)
- » Aerosol is a suspension of tiny particles within gas.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. **Question:** Ask students what they think will happen when you spray water onto a surface? Hairspray? Any difference expected?
2. Spray water bottle onto a desk or paper towel. Ask student to smell and touch wet spot. What happens as it dries? Report observations.
3. Spray aerosol hairspray bottle onto a desk or paper towel. Ask student to smell and touch wet spot. What happens as it dries? Report observations.
4. **Question:** Do you think it's safe to spray the water into your mouth? What about aerosol? Why or why not?

POSSIBLE STUDENT ANSWERS:

Question: Ask students what they think will happen when you spray water onto a surface? Hairspray? Any difference expected?

Answer:

- » Water: Surface will get wet, no odour, dry and residue (can't tell it was there).
- » Hairspray: Surface will get wet, sticky, odour, may dry sticky and leave residue.

Question: Do you think it's safe to spray the water into your mouth? What about the aerosol? Why or why not?

Answer:

- » Water: Ingestion would be safe if bottle was clean etc.
- » Hairspray: Ingestion would be dangerous – it is filled with many toxic chemicals (e.g. propylene glycol, the main solvent in vape “e-juice juice”).

FACT: E-cigarette companies described their products as vapour, to make vaping seem safe. However, “vaping” is actually inhaling an aerosol, filled with toxic chemicals.

Cessation Resources

1



App available
at the Apple Store
and Google Play

Quash

<https://www.quashapp.com/>

For Youth:

Free app and website to support youth wanting to quit vaping.

For Allies:

BRIEF CONVERSATIONS TOOLKIT

Brief Conversations Toolkit aims to help curb the youth vaping by increasing knowledge and application of Brief Contact Interventions (BCI) among those who work or engage with youth who smoke, vape or use other nicotine products.

<https://www.quashapp.com/conversations>

QUASH FACILITATOR TRAINING

<https://www.quashapp.com/allies>

2



App available
at the Apple Store
and Google Play

Stop Vaping Challenge

<https://stopvapingchallenge.ca/>

For Youth:

Free app that provides a space for youth to reflect on their vaping behaviours through an exciting “abstinence challenge.”

3



Not An Experiment (NAE)

<https://www.notanexperiment.ca/>

For Youth:

Develop a customized quit plan.

For Allies:

Download and print a Quit Vaping Pocket Guide for youth from the Educators Page. (Downloadable Quit Plan).



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