



Supporting young people  
to give up  
**Vaping or nicotine products**

There is currently no national strategy for helping children break free from a nicotine dependency. Prof Linda Bauld suggests parents seek medical advice, for instance from a GP or an NHS adviser, if their child is struggling to quit.

Only one nicotine replacement product, a mouth spray, is medically licensed to help young people quit vaping but a doctor can provide more detailed advice on other nicotine products such as nicotine chewing gum or lozenges commonly used to help those giving up tobacco. Such products should never be used by a child aged under 12, as nicotine is considered toxic for younger children.

**Encourage someone to list the benefits of giving up first, talk them through – here are some ideas below.**

Before starting, encourage them to keep a note/ diary of how often they are



turning to a substance (nicotine/cannabis/alcohol).

- Record what the triggers are – social situations, on own, stress or anxiety, friendship group
- Think about what makes them want to use and suggest alternative ways of responding. For example if they vape to help them relax, think about what else might work and try that out. Suggestions might include have a relaxing play list, make a herbal tea, watch a movie, gaming, go for a run.

## Help prepare them to cut down or quit

### Top tips for cutting down

- ✓ Suggest they tell loved ones and good friends who will support them.
- ✓ Don't underestimate the challenge – talk through the stages that will be faced:
  - ✓ Like many drugs, when someone stops taking nicotine they can suffer withdrawal symptoms. Headaches and dizziness could be among the first, though they taper off relatively quickly. A bigger challenge is cravings as the brain cries out for the dopamine it has become accustomed to. Each craving typically lasts 15-20 minutes, and as with smoking it takes huge self discipline to resist them.
  - ✓ Other physical symptoms of withdrawal can include fatigue, constipation and increased appetite - but there are also mental and emotional challenges. After a few days without nicotine, many people report a rise in restlessness and anxiety, while others suffer low mood.
  - ✓ Irritability is another symptom while brain fog may affect the ability to concentrate for 2-4 weeks as the nicotine wears off and leaves the body.
  - ✓ Help them recognise that a lapse isn't a fail. What can they learn from it? What could they do next time? Look at the trigger table to help identify tempting situations and talk about how to avoid or replace them.

### It might be easier to start by being mindful and trying to cut down first

- ✓ Delay the time of day of first vape/nicotine hit. Using first thing in the morning leads to the development of tolerance throughout the day and increases the risk of dependence
- ✓ Extend the time between vaping or nicotine use (e.g. 20 minutes between vaping becomes 40 minutes). – every extra ½ hour is a win.
- ✓ Make a swap to a lower nicotine strength or nicotine free product. This might include reducing the nicotine strength of their e-liquid in two to four-week stages, working down to 0% solutions. This can be trickier with disposable vapes, which tend to come in higher strengths. But zero-nicotine versions are available.
- ✓ Alternating with a nicotine free vape alongside a regular vape will halve intake. However, some disposable vapes are marketed as "nicotine-free" **but tests on some of these products have found that is not true.** The potentially harmful chemicals are still present and the repeated hand-to-mouth action can be a barrier to quitting completely.
- ✓ Swapping to a hot drink or mints/ gum might help as a distraction when the craving hits.
- ✓ Putting vapes/devices more out of reach – in a high cupboard or in a zipped bag, so they are harder to get to and someone has a chance to think – I can resist this craving.

- ✓ Establish vape/nicotine free spaces - for example, only vaping outside of the home or only on breaks at work.
- ✓ Encourage setting limits to the number of puffs or time spent vaping. Setting a limit for how much used might help keep use under control
- ✓ Avoid buying more than one device or refill at a time. The more someone breaks up the pattern of use the easier it will be to control use and cravings.

**When they're ready to quit:**

- ✓ Set a date to start and have rewards for each small milestone – maybe a Chinese takeaway treat for the first nicotine free 24 hours, a trip to the cinema etc
- ✓ Suggest a plan to keep them busy and distracted – starting a new hobby like running or a part time job.
- ✓ Choose a time to quit such as during the holidays or on a trip, that is a break in routine with supportive people around them
- ✓ If someone prefers to try and stop vaping in one step, they can ask the pharmacist about switching to a suitable nicotine replacement therapy product. There are mints, mists and gum available for 12+ years. Or visit the GP or smoking cessation services. The GP or nurse SHOULD always help and ensure counselling and the right help and support is given – or find an on line chat and there are apps that help with quitting too. The earlier help is sought the easier the quitting will be.

**What are my triggers for use?**

People	Places
Things	Thoughts/ feelings
How can I respond differently	

**I have decided to cut down nicotine because**

**My goal is**

Hint: Be specific with your goal, for example to stop / reduce to one day a week / to have a month break.

**The rewards will be**

**Who will help me and how?**

Hint: This could be practical, such as planning other activities away from nicotine or emotionally checking in with you around your mood.

**What will I do to help with the mental health effects of change?**

**What will I do with the physical health effects of change?**

**What will I do to help with habit effects of change?**

**What will I do to help with social effects of change?**

**These diaries can help set targets and help enable a change.**

<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Time of day</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Where/ who with</b>	<b>Mood before</b>	<b>Mood after</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Mon</b>						
<b>Tues</b>						
<b>Wed</b>						
<b>Thurs</b>						
<b>Fri</b>						
<b>Sat</b>						
<b>Sun</b>						

**Week One – What is my goal at the end of week one?** – Think about what steps you need to take and how you can achieve this. Plan what steps you need to take to achieve it.

Week 2	Time of day	Amount	Where/ who with	Mood before	Mood after	Cost
<b>Mon</b>						
<b>Tues</b>						
<b>Wed</b>						
<b>Thurs</b>						
<b>Fri</b>						
<b>Sat</b>						
<b>Sun</b>						

**Week Two – How did you get on in week one?** Are there things that you need to do differently? What went well, and what didn't? Set yourself your goals for week two and work on these.

## Where to go for help and support

Useful resources

Vaping to quit smoking - Better Health - NHS

[nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/vaping-to-quit-smoking/](https://nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/vaping-to-quit-smoking/)

Chief Medical Officer for England on vaping

[gov.uk/government/speeches/chief-medical-officer-for-england-on-vaping](https://gov.uk/government/speeches/chief-medical-officer-for-england-on-vaping)

Nicotine vaping in England: 2022 evidence update

[gov.uk/government/publications/nicotine-vaping-in-england-2022-evidence-update/nicotine-vaping-in-england-2022-evidence-update-main-findings](https://gov.uk/government/publications/nicotine-vaping-in-england-2022-evidence-update/nicotine-vaping-in-england-2022-evidence-update-main-findings)

Electronic Cigarettes - ASH

[ash.org.uk/resources/view/electronic-cigarettes](https://ash.org.uk/resources/view/electronic-cigarettes)

Vaping And E-Cigarettes: The Facts For Parents And Carers

[smokefreesheffield.org/app/uploads/2023/03/11435-SFS-%E2%80%93-A5-4pp-vaping-Parent-and-carers-2.2s.pdf](https://smokefreesheffield.org/app/uploads/2023/03/11435-SFS-%E2%80%93-A5-4pp-vaping-Parent-and-carers-2.2s.pdf)

Scottish government: Parent Club

[parentclub.scot/articles/information-and-facts-about-vaping](https://parentclub.scot/articles/information-and-facts-about-vaping)

If you have any feedback or comments regarding this guide or the web materials please email [info@talkabouttrust.org](mailto:info@talkabouttrust.org)

Produced for **The TALK ABOUT Trust**

Registered charity - England and Wales: 1186202, Scotland: SCO50360



[talkabouttrust.org](https://talkabouttrust.org)



[talkaboutalcohol.com](https://talkaboutalcohol.com)



[life-stuff.org](https://life-stuff.org)

[instagram.com/life\\_stuff.Org/](https://instagram.com/life_stuff.Org/)



[tiktok.com/@life\\_stuff.Org](https://tiktok.com/@life_stuff.Org)

Copyright Helena Conibear of The TALK ABOUT Trust. All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission in accordance with the provisions of the copyright act 1956.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 licence.

To view a copy of this licence, visit [creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/)