

SORTED

Substance Use and Misuse Team

THC Vaping Parent/Guardian Resource

Introduction

There has been an increase in young people using vapes and in particular experimenting with THC vaping. THC is the chemical that gives the 'high' effect in cannabis. The latest reports show that this has led to some young people overdosing on THC, causing them to become unwell and needing medical attention. This resource has been created to give information to support conversations with your child around THC vaping. You will read about THC vaping, the short term and long term effects as well as the legalities to help you make the most informed decisions to keep your child safe and happy.

What Is Vaping?

Vaping is the inhalation of vapor from a vaping device or e-cigarette. These devices are electronic, and they heat a liquid to a vapour to be inhaled. The liquid is usually a mixture containing nicotine, propylene glycol and/or vegetable glycerine, and flavourings. Other liquids can be added to the vape.

What Is THC Vaping?

The most common emerging trend amongst young people is to add THC oil to their vaping liquid. THC oil is a sticky thick, yellowy brown liquid which comes from the cannabis plant. THC is the chemical that gives the 'high' effect and it is illegal in the UK.



How Do I Know My Child Is Vaping?

Vaping tends to produce clouds of smoke that are scentless and disappear quickly, so it can be difficult to sense if your child is using a vape. Vaping is relatively new still, and little is known about the short term effects, however it is generally thought that vaping is less harsh than smoking as it is generally tobacco free and has less chemicals than cigarettes, which is why it is a popular method for stopping smoking. The short term effects of vaping can also vary depending on what is in the vaping liquid such as the nicotine content. However inhaling any substances is not entirely risk free. Below are some images of different styles of vape or e cigarettes.



Short Term Effects Of Vaping THC

How Do I Know My Child Is Vaping THC?

Vaping THC will have similar effects to using cannabis. Vaping THC as opposed to smoking cannabis allows a larger amount of THC to be inhaled very quickly, potentially causing overdosing. The effects of vaping THC depends on the amount of THC/CBD in the vape, your child's mood, the environment and how often it is used. The short term effects are listed on the right and can be signs your child has vaped THC oil.



ATTENTION

- Blood shot eyes
- Dazed/dreamy demeanour
- Short term memory loss
- Faint/feeling sick
- The giggles
- The munchies
- Dry mouth
- Paranoia
- Anxiety



You can watch more about the short term effects on this talktofrank video. [FRANK: Cannabis Side Effects - YouTube](#)

Will Vaping THC Effect My Childs Health Long Term?

The long term health effects of vaping are still being studied. It is believed that whilst vaping is not risk free as it still contains chemicals, it contains a significant amount less than a traditional cigarette as there is no tobacco therefore no tar or carbon monoxide. Studies are beginning in the USA on the impact of vaping on the lungs. However we know that vaping THC can cause the same long term health effects as cannabis use which are laid out below.

You can read more on the NHS website about vaping to stop smoking. [Using e-cigarettes to stop smoking - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk).

The long term effects of cannabis use can include the increased risk of psychotic illness such as schizophrenia as well as other mental health issues.

Schizophrenia = delusions and hallucinations.

- Delusions – believing things that are not true
- Hallucinations – seeing things that are not really there

Risk of schizophrenia is increased if you use cannabis from a young age, frequent use, stronger cannabis i.e. skunk, and family history of schizophrenia.

Mental Health -

- Anxiety and paranoia
- Hallucinations

These can happen during use, and may settle when stopped but use can also aggravate existing mental health issues.



You can read more on the NHS website about the mental and physical effects associated with cannabis use. [Cannabis: the facts - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk).

Vaping And The Law

The law around vaping can be very tricky to understand as there is a lack of legislation around vaping. You must be 18 to buy a vape pen. There is no law around where you can and cannot vape, but many places adopt the same rules as smoking, therefore you must go by venue policy. Similarly, driving whilst vaping is not illegal, but the cloud of smoke can be considered a hazard whilst driving and can get you into trouble. However as THC is illegal, vaping THC oil follows the same laws as cannabis laid out below.



Will My Child Get Into Trouble For Using THC Vapes?

Cannabis is an illegal Class B drug. There are consequences for the **illegal** possession, supply and production of cannabis.

Possession – having (possessing) cannabis in any form including edibles can get you up to 5 years in prison, unlimited fine or both.

Supply - supplying cannabis which includes giving it to your friends for free or sharing it with them can get you up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both.

Dealing - selling cannabis for any sized financial gain can get you up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both.

Trafficking - moving it around the country on transport or through private vehicle etc. can get you up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both.

Production - producing cannabis whether growing for self consumption or to be sold can get you up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both.

Young people who use cannabis are at increased risk of child criminal exploitation (CCE), and to be groomed into County Lines operations, see below for more information.

To read more about the legality of cannabis please see the government website [Drugs penalties - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk). To learn more about county lines and CCE, see The Childrens Society website [What Is County Lines? | The Children's Society \(childrensociety.org.uk\)](https://www.childrensociety.org.uk).



How Can I Help My Child?

It can be difficult to know the best way to support your child if you are concerned. Speaking with professionals already working with your child is the first step such as teachers, and key workers.

Below are local and national services to find more information and support for your child.



Local

- Adolescent Development Services SORTED
 - sorted@hillingdon.gov.uk
 - 01895 250 721
- ARCH Hillingdon
 - 01895 207 777
 - arch.hillingdon@nhs.net



National

- Childline - 0800 1111
- Frank - talktofrank.com
 - 0300 123 6600
 - frank@talktofrank.com
 - text - 82111
- youngminds - youngminds.org.uk
- ADFAM - adfam.org.uk
- Samaritans - samaritans.org
- The Childrens Society - childrensociety.org.uk
- MIND - mind.org.uk
- CYPMHS - NHS mental health support
 - nhs.uk - search CYPMHS