

Smoking is one of the worst lifestyle choices you can make: about half of all smokers will die from smoking, and of these, about half will die before or around the age of 50. Not to mention that a smoker's life is affected in other ways, such as damaged eyesight, reduced lung capacity and empty pockets.

The main addictive ingredient in cigarette smoke is nicotine. Cigarette smoke also contains hundreds of other harmful chemicals, many of them added to cause the mood-altering effects of the nicotine. Like all smoke (including smoke from wood fires), it also contains small particles* that destroy the lungs and cause illness and death.

capacity

cause

increase

choices

industry

A Lesser Evil

An e-cigarette works by using a battery-powered heater called an atomizer to change a liquid into a vapour*. The vapour usually contains nicotine, flavours and some other, mostly harmless, chemicals. The vapour does not contain the hundreds of additives* that are in cigarette smoke, nor does it contain the lung-destroying smoke particles. That's why vaping is less dangerous than smoking.

However, that does not mean vaping is harmless. Most vape "juices" are roughly equal to cigarettes in nicotine delivery per minute, and this nicotine is very harmful and highly addictive. As Jasmine Khouja, a vaping expert with the Tobacco and Alcohol Research Group at the University of Bristol, in the UK, put it to me, "Anyone who's using e-cigarettes that isn't using them to quit smoking is at high risk."

E-CIGARETTE ENDS

Unlike cigarettes, e-cigarettes do not create rubbish each time you use them. However, e-cigarettes, the batteries that power them, and the cartridges that hold the vape juice are all hazardous* waste. They cannot be thrown into normal rubbish without proper processing. Littering with e-cigarette waste is very harmful to the environment. Leftover nicotine in used vape cartridges can also poison animals, plants and even children who find and play with them – as little as a teaspoon of liquid nicotine is enough to kill a three-year-old child.

True or False:

1. The vapour usually contains no chemicals at all.
2. The vapour is harmful as it contains some lung-destroying smoke particles.
3. Vaping can be harmful as well as addictive.
4. E-cigarettes do not create any rubbish and are environmentally friendly.