

電子菸—造成青少年不良口腔健康的現行犯

Vaping: The Smoking Gun of Poor Oral Health in Teens

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在美國，二月是全國兒童牙齒健康月，這是宣傳兒童牙醫資源重要性的絕佳時機，也提醒大家，要維持良好的口腔健康。兒童牙科保健關注的對象，通常是年紀較小的兒童，青少年口腔衛教和相關資源則往往不受重視，這主要是因為即將成年的青少年，在兒童時期應該已經培養出良好的口腔保健習慣。但隨著青春期的到來，家長和醫師在評估青少年口腔健康風險行為時，應該注意到許多個人健康因素和社會變化。

目前全美最主要的公衛問題之一，就是有高比例的青少年使用電子菸。電子菸之所以會出現，最初是想利用尼古丁蒸發器取代傳統紙捲菸，以銷售給想戒菸的人¹。但結果卻造成青少年對電子菸有錯誤的見解，低估了電子菸對口腔和整體健康的風險。時下青少年和一般大眾都以為電子菸是「較健康」的抽菸替代方案。電子菸和 VAPES 公司創造出迷思和廣告，對於那些深受其影響的青少年，我們有必要提供相關教育，讓他們意識到電子菸有危害健康之虞^{1,2}。

許多因素都可能導致青少年口腔健康不佳，很多口腔健康風險因素更與影響整體健康的併發症有直接相關。美國牙科協會（American Dental Association, ADA）探討吸菸和攝取菸草製品可能危害口腔健康的風險（包括牙齦疾病和口腔癌），但卻忽略了電子菸和非菸草製品可能造成的健康風險³。許多為青少年舉辦的拒菸活動和菸害教育，都著重在與菸草有關的健康問題；但近年來非菸草產品激增，尼古丁和其他相關化學品造成的健康風險也隨之上升，令人不得不重視這些議題。

美國國家藥物濫用研究所（National Institute on Drug Abuse, NIDA）指出，受到電子菸風潮影響的年輕族群，從最年輕的 8 年級生，到整個中學階段都有。許多報告顯示，國高中生使用電子菸的可能性是傳統紙捲菸的兩倍，而使用電子菸的青少年中，約三分之一會在開始使用電子菸後的 6 個月內，開始吸食菸草產品⁴。電子菸和蒸發器確實不含菸草，但這並不表示他們帶來的尼古丁影響不嚴重。尼古丁依然是一種具高度成癮性的化學物質，目前已知尼古丁會致癌，還會增加一系列健康問題的風險，如心臟病、肺癌、胰腺癌、胃腸道系統癌症、乳癌等³。電子菸中含有尼古丁與化學物質，

對牙齒及牙齦尤其有害。頻繁吸食電子菸會讓血液中含有大量尼古丁，抑制血液流動和唾液分泌，造成肌肉張力升高，這些影響對牙齒和牙齦更是顯著。以上因素都可能導致牙齦疾病和蛀牙風險，更不用說還有磨牙和持續口臭的問題³。早期電子菸以「戒菸者的另一選擇」來行銷，讓許多人誤以為電子菸是一種比較健康的香菸替代品，因而導致青少年吸收了大量錯誤訊息，與電子菸一樣毒害著青少年。高中生特別容易受這些混雜的訊息影響。百分之三十到五十的高中生會接觸到各種和電子菸有關的廣告，其中包括零售商、網際網路、電視、雜誌廣告等媒介⁴。正因為這些產品有如此大量的推廣，更凸顯需要口腔健康素養工具的急迫性，要教育青少年，讓他們了解這些產品對口腔和整體健康可能產生的嚴重負面影響。

青春期中是人生中相當混亂的階段。青春期的青少年期許自己在學校和課外活動上都要有良好表現，同時也面臨高中畢業後迫切的生活壓力，還要做出種種攸關未來的重要決定。這個階段的青少年正在學習如何平衡多重責任，同時讓自己保持健康快樂。不幸的是，在吸菸不斷被譽為「抒壓品」的狀態下，許多青少年為對抗這些新壓力源，以吸菸作為解套。電子菸常被視為可作為紙捲菸和攝取菸草產品的較安全替代選擇，但長期頻繁地吸食電子菸會導致許多嚴重的口腔健康問題。2018 年，美國食品和藥物管理局（U.S. Food and Drug Administration, FDA）針對目前推行中的戒菸運動「吸菸的真實代價（The Real Cost）」，修訂了相關內容，編入電子菸的破壞性影響，讓民眾意識到電子菸在校園環境風行的現況⁵。若繼續聲稱「電子菸是更安全的吸菸替代方案」，以此方法銷售電子菸，對現在和將來的青少年將造成無法挽回的傷害，這也更加突顯了電子菸相關口腔衛教的重要性。身為醫護人員，我們必須立即採取行動，教育青少年，讓他們了解使用電子菸的危險！

Vaping: The Smoking Gun of Poor Oral Health in Teens

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February is National Children's Dental Health Month, a great opportunity to promote the importance of children's dental resources and raise awareness about good oral health practices for tiny teeth. Although pediatric dental health often focuses on younger children, oral health education and resources for teens are often overlooked because this group, on the cusp of adulthood, is expected to maintain good oral health care developed in early childhood. However, with adolescence comes many personal health and social changes that parents and practitioners alike should be aware of in assessing teen oral health risk behaviors.

A major public health concern across the U.S. is the high rate of teens who smoke electronic cigarettes. Originally marketed for those looking to quit smoking tobacco, nicotine vaporizers and e-cigarettes are replacing traditional cigarettes.¹ As a result, teens are largely misinformed about the oral and overall health risks of vaping, which is now viewed as an overall "healthier" alternative to smoking tobacco by teens and the general public. This group is widely influenced by myths and advertising for e-cigs and vapes, and there is a need for greater awareness and education on the health risks of vaping in this group.^{1,2}

There are a variety of factors that contribute to poor oral health in teens, and many oral health risk factors are directly linked to complications with overall health. The American Dental Association (ADA) discusses the [oral health risks of smoking](#) and ingesting tobacco products, including gum disease and oral cancer, but they neglect to include the oral health risks of smoking e-cigarettes and non-tobacco products.³ Many anti-smoking campaigns and smoking education for teens focus on tobacco-related health problems, but the recent surge of non-tobacco smoking products and the health risks associated with nicotine and other chemicals makes a compelling case for addressing these issues.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), the [vaping epidemic](#) affects teens as early as 8th grade and throughout high school. Various reports show that junior and senior high school students are twice as likely to use e-cigarettes as traditional cigarettes, yet roughly a third of these teens will start smoking tobacco products within 6 months.⁴ Although e-cigs and vaporizers are indeed tobacco-free, this does not mean that the effects of nicotine are any less brutal. It is still a highly addictive chemical that is known to cause cancer and increase risk for a range of health problems, namely heart disease and cancer of the lungs, pancreas, gastrointestinal system and breasts.³ Nicotine and other chemicals in vapes and e-cigs are [especially bad for teeth and gums](#); frequent vaping means high amounts of nicotine in your bloodstream that reduces blood flow and saliva production and can increase muscle tension, particularly in teeth and gums. All of this can lead to painful gum disease and tooth decay, not to mention teeth grinding and persistent bad breath.³

Due to early marketing of e-cigarettes as an option for those looking to quit smoking tobacco, many people falsely view e-cigs as a healthier alternative to cigarettes. This leads to drastic misinformation absorbed by teens that is proven to be just as poisonous as vaping. High school students are especially vulnerable to

these mixed messages, with 30-50% of them exposed to ads for vaping and e-cigs through all forms of advertising including retail, internet, TV and magazine ads.⁴ This pervasive promotion of the products demonstrates an urgent need for oral health literacy tools to educate adolescent youth about the severe negative impact that these products can have on oral and overall health.

Adolescence is known to be a tumultuous period in a person's life. Expectations to perform well in school and extracurricular activities are high, along with impending pressure about life after high school and making important decisions about the future. During this time, teens are learning how to balance multiple responsibilities while also staying happy and healthy. Many teens seek out ways to combat these new stressors and, unfortunately, smoking is and always has been promoted as a great stress reliever. Smoking e-cigarettes is often seen as a safer alternative to smoking and/or ingesting tobacco products, but there are many serious oral health problems that can result from long-term and frequent vaping. In 2018, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) revised its current anti-smoking campaign *The Real Cost* to include the destructive effects of e-cigarettes and to raise awareness about the epidemic of vaping in schools.⁵ Continuing to market e-cigarettes as a "safer" alternative will cause irreparable harm to today's teens and future adolescents, making the need for oral health education regarding e-cigarettes especially important. As health professionals, we need to act now to educate our teens about the perils of e-cigarettes and vaping!

1 Waitt, T. Vaping and oral health: It's worse than you think. *American Security Today*. Published on January 28, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://americansecuritytoday.com/vaping-and-oral-health-its-worse-than-you-think-learn-more-videos/>

2 Allen, B. E-Cigarettes: Vaping and dental health. *Delta Dental*. Published on June 5, 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.deltadentalwa.com/blog/entry/2018/06/ecigarettes-vaping-dental-health>

3 Mouth Healthy. Concerns. *American Dental Association*. Published 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/teens/concerns>

4 National Institute on Drug Abuse. Teens and e-cigarettes. *National Institutes of Health; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*. Updated February 2016. Retrieved from: <https://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/trends-statistics/infographics/teens-e-cigarettes>

5 U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The real cost campaign. *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*. Updated February 5, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.fda.gov/TobaccoProducts/PublicHealthEducation/PublicEducationCampaigns/TheRealCostCampaign/default.htm>

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