

E-Cigarettes

“O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall flow forth thy praise.” Psalm 51:15

E-cigarette is short for electronic cigarette. They were first made in China, and the US began seeing them in 2007. They are touted as being a healthy alternative to smoking. Instead of inhaling tobacco smoke, the user inhales a vapor containing nicotine. They sure look like cigarettes, with a nice glow at the tip, and realistic “smoke” to blow out. They contain a battery, a heating device, and liquid nicotine. The nicotine heats up and creates the vapor that mimics smoke.

However, the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) is not convinced of their safety or superiority over cigarettes. The lack of study and regulation has health experts very skeptical of the “health” claims hyped by e-cigarette manufacturers. And yet there have been very few studies made to determine the safety of these devices. In the meanwhile, the sale of e-cigarettes has become a billion dollar business, and although sales to a minor is illegal, its use by tweens (11-12 year olds) doubled between 2011-2012.

Here are some of the reasons given for switching from regular cigarettes to e-cigarettes:

No ashes—less mess

Fewer chemicals (yes, e-cigs contain chemicals)

Money saver (one e-cig has the same amount of nicotine as a regular pack)

Delicious flavors! (you can choose flavor with your nicotine)

Choose the strength of nicotine (more or less than regular cigarettes)

Use them anywhere, since you are not really smoking

No fire risk, smell, or stained teeth

No second-hand smoke

Now a reality check. Replaceable cartridges were examined, and there were large differences between what the manufacturer claimed was in the liquid and what was actually found. This included the actual concentration of nicotine, and the presence of chemicals not on the list of ingredients.

Parents need to be especially concerned. Liquid nicotine can cause nicotine poisoning. The cartridges have no child safety caps on them, and swallowing the contents of one 24mg cartridge could easily kill a child weighing under 64 lbs. Liquid nicotine can even be absorbed through the skin.

The nicotine solution contains propylene glycol, which is known to irritate the lungs when it’s inhaled. There were other toxic chemicals found in e-cigarettes, and this happens because there is no regulation at this time for the production of this latest fad.

Overall, it seems that the risk is not worth it! If you don’t smoke, e-cigarettes are not the way to go. And if you do smoke but want to stop, there are many proven and safer ways to accomplish your goal. We are given one body—treasure it and take good care of it.

More info: www.wedmd.com or www.lung.org

Blessings, Nurse Karen