

Explanatory note on vaping products, commonly referred to e-cigarettes, electronic nicotine & non-nicotine delivery systems (EN&NNDS)

This document provides general information about vaping products, defined for this purpose exclusively as e-cigarettes, electronic nicotine & non-nicotine delivery systems (EN&NNDS)¹.

Tobacco Europe members² are committed to educating and informing public officials and the general public with the aim to prevent the underage use of vaping products.

The target consumers for vaping products are current adult users of tobacco products, vaping products or other nicotine products.

1. What are vaping products?

Vaping products are composed of a handheld battery-powered electronic device and a nicotine or non-nicotine containing e-liquid. The electronic device is used to heat up the e-liquid, creating a vapour that is consumed by the user. The e-liquid generally contains propylene glycol, vegetable glycerol, flavourings and nicotine (where applicable). It is contained within a pre-filled bottle or single use cartridge or pod, for use in an electronic cigarette. E-liquids without nicotine are also available. E-liquids do not contain tobacco.

Vaping products fall into two broad types: closed or open systems. Closed systems are simple-to-use devices which feature a pre-filled cartridge or pod of e-liquid. Open systems require the user to refill the tank of the open system device with any commercially available e-liquid from a refill container.

2. What is nicotine?

Nicotine is a naturally occurring chemical compound that is derived from tobacco. It is produced in the tobacco root and collects in the leaves of the plant. Low concentrations of nicotine can also be found in other plants, such as tomatoes, eggplants, peppers and potatoes.

What does nicotine do to your body?

When inhaled, nicotine produces a range of temporary physiological effects, like any other stimulants e.g., caffeine, such being an increased heart rate, increased blood pressure and dizziness. However, these effects are transient. Nicotine is not a carcinogen and does not cause any smoking-related diseases.

Is the use of nicotine risk-free?

¹ We are aware that other vaping products are available on the market, but these are not in the scope of this educational document. Vaping products in this context refers strictly to e-cigarettes, electronic nicotine & non-nicotine delivery systems (EN&NNDS).

² British American Tobacco, Imperial Brands and Japan Tobacco International

Nicotine is not risk free as it is addictive, but it is not toxic at the levels found in legal tobacco and nicotine products, which is why the sale of any nicotine product should be age restricted.

Almost all the harm from smoking comes from the thousands of other chemicals in tobacco smoke, many of which are toxic.³⁴

Nicotine does not cause lung cancer. Scientific evidence shows that nicotine is not a carcinogen⁵, and that nicotine exposure does not increase the risk of developing cancer⁶. Tobacco derived nicotine is an approved medicine and is even available without prescription in many countries

What are flavours?

Flavours are additives that impart a distinct taste or aroma, such as tobacco, menthol and fruit.

3. Is there a fixed nicotine ceiling for vaping products in the European Union?

The nicotine ceiling for e-liquids in the European Union is 20mg/ml.

4. To whom do we sell?

Vaping products are only sold to people above 18 years of age or above the legal age of purchase, where this is higher than 18 years. Vaping products are for adult consumption, this is clearly indicated on the packaging.

³ <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/using-e-cigarettes-to-stop-smoking/>

⁴ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28065790/>

⁵ <https://yorkshirecancerresearch.org.uk/news/the-truth-about-vaping>

⁶ <https://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/content/27/1/10>