



One example of a rechargeable e-cigarette model



“blu” is a brand of electronic cigarettes manufactured by Lorillard, the company that makes Newport cigarettes. It is purposefully designed to look different than a cigarette for use by consumers in places with smoke-free policies.



This disposable electronic cigarette produced by NJOY costs about \$7. NJOY is the number one selling brand of electronic cigarettes.

WHAT IS AN ELECTRONIC CIGARETTE?

Electronic cigarettes, also called e-cigarettes, are battery operated nicotine vaporizers that are produced primarily in China.¹ E-cigarettes often look like a traditional cigarette but do not produce smoke. The use of e-cigarettes is referred to as “vaping” rather than “smoking.”

E-cigarette users purchase cartridges filled with liquid nicotine and other substances, attach the cartridge onto the e-cigarette battery, and breathe in nicotine vapor produced by a small heating element.

The cartridges are sold in many flavors such as cherry, bubblegum, vanilla, and fruit punch, making them appealing to youth.² Disposable e-cigarettes sell for about \$5 and rechargeable e-cigarettes cost up to \$120. E-cigarettes are often advertised as a safer alternative to tobacco cigarettes; however, the potential health risks associated with these products is not known.

Liquid nicotine found in e-cigarettes is derived from tobacco; however, most of the devices do not contain any tobacco. Similar to tobacco cigarettes, heavy metals, carcinogens, silicate, and nanoparticles (which can go deep into the lungs) have been found in e-cigarette vapor.³

ARE ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES REGULATED?

The production and manufacturing of e-cigarettes is poorly regulated.^{4,5} The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has noted that “quality control processes used to manufacture these products are inconsistent or nonexistent.” For example, three different e-cigarette cartridges with the same label were tested and each cartridge released a substantially different amount of nicotine with each puff.⁶

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF ELECTRONIC CIGARETTE USE?

Because these products are so new, little is known about their long term health effects. There is a significant amount of research showing the harmful effects of nicotine: a highly addictive stimulant that increases blood pressure and heart rate.³ E-cigarettes are designed to deliver high amounts of nicotine to the user. Often, e-cigarettes deliver more than two times the amount of nicotine approved by the FDA for smoking cessation aids.¹ Many of the ingredients found in e-cigarettes are known to be dangerous to human health. These ingredients can cause: lung and cardiac inflammation, cancer, and cell damage.



Many e-cigarettes are advertised as a smoke-free alternative, especially as a New Year's resolution. Source: Rolling Stone (January 17, 2013). Retrieved from www.trinketsandtrash.org



Source: Ok! Magazine (October 3, 2011). Retrieved from www.trinketsandtrash.org

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WHO USES ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES?

As a result of widespread availability, sales of e-cigarettes are increasing rapidly. Some predict that electronic cigarette sales could overtake traditional cigarette sales in the next decade. Electronic cigarettes are popular among people who are looking for an alternative to traditional cigarettes. These people are often looking for a “safer” alternative and the ability to smoke in places where cigarette smoking is prohibited.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP PREVENT YOUTH ELECTRONIC CIGARETTE USE?

It is critical that local municipalities regulate e-cigarettes. All e-cigarette vendors should be licensed and subject to the same provisions as traditional tobacco retailers to ensure youth do not have access to these products. Minnesota state law currently regulates the sale of e-cigarettes by prohibiting sale to minors. Local ordinances should be updated at the county and city level to ensure that e-cigarettes are not sold to those under 18 years of age.

Sources:

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