

# E-Cigarettes: An Important Health and Safety Concern

## What are electronic cigarettes?

Electronic cigarettes, also known as e-cigarettes, are battery operated products designed to deliver liquid nicotine, other flavors, and harmful chemicals to the user by inhalation.

## What is a hookah?

Hookahs are water pipes and pens that are used to smoke tobacco or other products. They frequently contain a variety of added flavors such as mint, cherry, apple, and many others.

## Why is this a health and safety concern?

Electronic cigarettes and hookahs are gaining popularity among students. Both of these products are marketed and sold to our youth in stores and online. The increase in use of these products among our youth might be due to;

1. Companies marketing the products to them
  2. Ease of availability
  3. A perception that they are a safer alternative to cigarettes
  4. Family members using them
- Poison-center calls, related to e-cigarettes, have substantially increased. The danger comes from the liquid nicotine used in the device. The poison can occur in three ways: by ingestion, inhalation, and absorption through skin or eyes.
  - The device is not child proof, causing serious poisonings to our young children. These products come in candy and fruit flavors that are very appealing to children and if left unsupervised, can be fatal.
  - Poisoning from e-cigarettes can take the lives of adults, children and pets. Accidentally drinking a small portion of liquid nicotine may result in death.
  - There is a strong concern that experimentation with e-cigarettes will lead to smoking of other cigarettes or cigars. Nicotine is addictive and very dangerous regardless of how it is delivered.
  - Smokeless tobacco, and smoking are initiated in adolescence and if not stopped may become a lifelong habit with serious health consequences. Nine out of ten current smokers started smoking by age 18.
  - Younger people are more inclined to experiment with different forms of tobacco if their peers or family members smoke too.

## What can you do to help?

- Educate yourself and your children on how businesses market to all of us, but especially to our youth.
- Understand the dangers and health effects of all forms of tobacco.
- Understand what the BCPS policy is on smoking and the consequences that can occur to your child if they choose to smoke on school grounds.
- Talk to your representative to request their support for tougher laws regarding these products in order to protect our youth.