



RIGHT DECISIONS

**BE
NICOTINE
FREE**

RIGHT NOW



Empowering you to
help young people
to be nicotine free

**E-Cigarette/Vape
Module**

INTRODUCTION

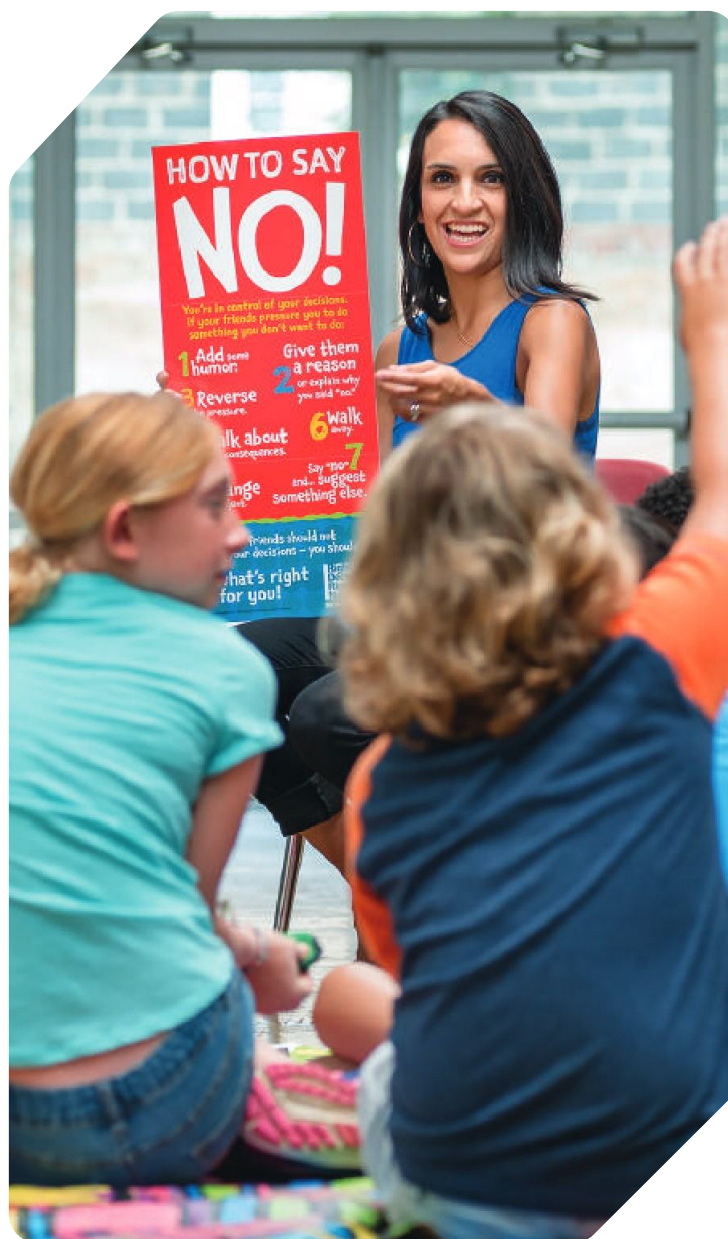
We are pleased to introduce the latest update to **Right Decisions Right Now: Be Nicotine Free**, a youth nicotine prevention program. This supplementary module is focused on electronic nicotine vapor products (e.g., e-cigarettes, pods, vapes, tanks). There are many types of these products available today. Youth use of these products has increased significantly over the last few years according to government surveys. These educational materials have been prepared in an effort to provide parents and educators with an additional resource to reinforce the message that youth should not use any tobacco or nicotine products – including vapor products.

This learning guide regarding e-cigarettes/vapes was developed by Young Minds Inspired (YMI), an educational firm based in New Haven, Connecticut with more than 30 years of experience in developing teaching materials and curricula. This work was funded by R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company.

Right Decisions Right Now: Be Nicotine Free (RDRN: Be Nicotine Free) was originally developed by Lifetime Learning Systems, Inc.; updated and adapted to a digital format by BKFK; and references and footnotes were updated by Young Minds Inspired. – In 2024, the program was updated and reviewed to ensure the content reflects evolving trends in youth tobacco and nicotine use. Since 1991, RDRN: Be Nicotine Free has been provided, free of charge, to parents, educators and other adults like you, to share facts and strategies to prevent young people from using tobacco, and nicotine products, including cigarettes, vapes, smokeless tobacco and nicotine pouches.

Today, underage smoking is at historic lows in this country. Including RDRN: Be Nicotine Free, have helped to dramatically reduce youth tobacco use. However, while there has been a steady decrease in cigarette use by youth, use of e-cigarettes and other vapor products has risen, and that is why these supplementary materials were developed.¹

Right Decisions Right Now: Be Nicotine Free can be an effective tool to raise awareness about the dangers of tobacco and nicotine products, including e-cigarettes and vapor products. This unit is intended to supplement existing teaching on not using tobacco or nicotine as part of your ongoing effort to keep young people on the path to a nicotine-free, lifestyle.



¹Results from the Annual National Youth Tobacco Survey, U.S. Food and Drug Administration, 2023. Referenced Feb 02, 2023. <https://www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/youth-and-tobacco/results-annual-national-youth-tobacco-survey#2023%20Findings%20on%20Youth%20Tobacco%20Use>The educational resources listed or linked to in this publication are provided as a convenience. R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company (RJRT) is not responsible for the content of those materials. The statements and views in those materials do not necessarily represent the views of RJRT or its management

ACTIVITY ONE

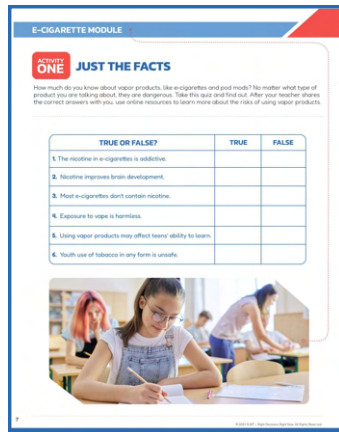
ACTIVITY 1 JUST THE FACTS

Rationale

This activity will help develop students' basic understanding of the risks associated with vapor products.

Getting Started

Introduce this topic by asking students if they have ever heard of electronic nicotine vapor products. — e-cigarettes, pod mods, vapes, e-hookahs, etc. Share with students the fact that, according to research by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), these products pose many risks to their health, which are highlighted in a brief quiz you will give them.



You may choose to have students take the quiz, individually or as a group, using the majority's choice to introduce discussion of each question.

Talking About It

answers

- 1. The nicotine in vapes is addictive. True.**
Nicotine in vapes is addictive and prolonged exposure to it may also make the brain more susceptible to becoming addicted to other substances. (**Know the Risks of E-cigarettes for Young People | Know the Risks: E-cigarettes & Young People | U.S. Surgeon General's Report**)
- 2. Nicotine improves brain development. False.**
Nicotine does not improve brain development. In fact, studies show that it can impede brain development, especially among youth. (<https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/knowtherisks.html>)
- 3. Most vapes don't contain nicotine. False.**
Most vapes contain nicotine. Students should be particularly cautious about nicotine because, in addition to being addictive, research suggests that nicotine exposure may also prime the brain

to become addicted to other substances. (<https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/knowtherisks.html>)

4. Exposure to vape ingredients is harmless. False.

Exposure to vape is not harmless. The CDC says, "The e-cigarette aerosol that users breathe from the device and exhale can contain harmful and potentially harmful substances, including: nicotine, ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs, flavorings such as diacetyl, a chemical linked to a serious lung disease, volatile organic compounds, and cancer-causing chemicals."

Heavy metals such as nickel, tin, and lead¹ (https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/Quick-Facts-on-the-Risks-of-E-cigarettes-for-Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults.html#why-is-nicotine-unsafe)



5. Using vapor products may affect teens' ability to learn. True.

Using vapor products may affect teens' ability to learn. The Surgeon General warns, "Nicotine also changes the way synapses are formed, which can harm the parts of the brain that control attention and learning." (<https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/default.htm>)

6. Youth use of tobacco or nicotine in any form is unsafe. True.

Youth use of tobacco or nicotine in any form is unsafe because of the health risks associated with all tobacco or nicotine products. (https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/youth_data/tobacco_use/index.htm)

Wrapping Up:

Vapes and other tobacco products contain nicotine, which is a drug. Whether you smoke, chew, dip, sniff, or vape a tobacco product, you're delivering nicotine to the brain. Nicotine is addictive. Nicotine withdrawal symptoms include irritability, craving, depression, anxiety, cognitive and attention deficits, sleep disturbances, and increased appetite.

NOW ASK THE GROUP:

How do you think being anxious, irritable, or depressed would affect your schoolwork and relationships? (Share with the group how being depressed might affect your work or family life. For example, if you were depressed, you might not have the energy to go to work or might not do a good job.)



³ https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/Quick-Facts-on-the-Risks-of-E-cigarettes-for-Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults.html#why-is-nicotine-unsafe

ACTIVITY TWO

ACTIVITY 2 WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Rationale

This discussion activity offers scenarios that students are likely to encounter and a variety of responses for students to consider.

Getting Started

Read the scenarios and the possible responses aloud to students and have them record their answers individually, or have the class discuss each scenario and the possible responses.

The screenshot shows the activity page with the following content:

E-CIGARETTE MODULE
ACTIVITY TWO WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Adolescence is full of peer pressure and difficult decisions. Sometimes, it's hard to know the right thing to do and it can be incredibly stressful to make positive choices. Here are some common scenarios involving vapor products and a set of possible responses from which to choose. Read the scenarios and discuss what you should do.

SCENARIO 1
A friend offers you an e-cigarette and assures you that it won't hurt you. What would you do?
A. Trust your friend and try it.
B. Tell your friend "no thanks."
C. Change the subject.

SCENARIO 2
A friend, who's older than you, wants to buy e-cigarettes for you and your friends. What would you do?
A. Let your friend buy them and then decide whether to use them.
B. Say "no thanks," then tell a parent or a trusted teacher what happened.
C. Tell your older friend that e-cigarettes — even those that say all-natural or organic — are harmful.

SCENARIO 3
You're at your friend's house after school one day. She says that she knows where her brother's vape is and that she was wondering if you would try one with her. What would you do?
A. Explain to your friend the dangers of using e-cigarettes and other vapor products.
B. Say that you're not interested, but that if she wants to try it, you'll watch.
C. Say "no thanks," then tell a parent that your friend is (or may be) using vapor products.

SCENARIO 4
You're invited to a party at the house of a classmate you don't know very well, but you decide to go anyway, since your friend was also invited. When you get there, some of your classmates are using e-cigarettes. What would you do?
A. Stay at the party, but politely refuse any offers of e-cigarettes.
B. Try one of the e-cigarettes so you don't stand out.
C. Try to find a ride home as soon as possible.

SCENARIO 5
You and a friend are going to see a movie. When your friend gets you up in his car, he tells you that he has been using e-cigarettes, while his parents are away. You didn't know that your friend used e-cigarettes. What would you do?
A. Tell him about the dangers associated with using vapor products.
B. Say nothing because it's not your problem.
C. Distance yourself from this person, and if the risks, explain why.

should realize that it is illegal for adults to buy tobacco products for minors. They should never ask someone to do that or accept an offer to do it.

Scenario 3: You're at your friend's house after school one day. She says that she knows where her brother's vape is and that she was wondering if you would try one with her.

C. Say "no thanks," then tell a parent that your friend is (or may be) using nicotine products. Students should feel empowered to say no in the face of such peer pressure. In addition, they should feel comfortable talking with a parent about situations like this one. They might even develop their own texting or calling "code" with a parent that provides them with "an out" when they are in an uncomfortable situation.

Talking About It

Answers may vary. A recommended answer is offered for each scenario.

Scenario 1: A friend offers you an a vape and assures you that it won't hurt you.

B. You tell your friend "no thanks." Students should understand that saying no is the best and safest option. Even trying a vape just once may lead to trying other substances which may be as addictive and harmful, or more so. https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/Quick-Facts-on-the-Risks-of-E-cigarettes-for-Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults.html#why-is-nicotine-unsafe

Scenario 2: A friend, who's older than you, wants to buy vapes for you and your friends.

B. Say "no thanks," then tell a parent or a trusted teacher what happened. Students may feel pressure to fit in with older students. Reiterate the importance of saying no to these potential pressures and to understanding the consequences. Review ways students can turn down an offer if they are in this situation, such as by saying, No thanks; I'm not interested; I don't want to get in trouble with the law, etc. Encourage students to talk with their parents or a trusted adult. In addition, students



Scenario 4: You're invited to a party at the house of a classmate you don't know very well, but you decide to go anyway, since your friend was also invited. When you get there, some of your classmates are using vapes.

C. Try to find a ride home as soon as possible.

Students should recognize the immediate health risks in this situation. As the CDC advises, e-cigarette aerosol is NOT harmless "water vapor." It can contain not only nicotine, but also ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs, flavoring such as diacetyl (a chemical linked to a serious lung disease), volatile organic compounds, cancer-causing chemicals, and heavy metals such as nickel, tin, and lead. Users inhale e-cigarette aerosol into their lungs. Bystanders can also breathe in this aerosol when the user exhales it into the air. The best way to avoid these health risks is to leave the party. Also discuss the potential peer pressure in this situation and how to deal with it. Encourage students to seek help from parents, educators, and medical caregivers in making wise choices. https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/Quick-Facts-on-the-Risks-of-E-cigarettes-for-Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults.html#why-is-nicotine-unsafe for more details.)

Recognizing peer pressure and peer influence are strong drivers in teens' behavior, it is important to discuss ways to say no and invite conversation with parents about the friend's behavior. While educating teens about the dangers associated with nicotine products, such as vapes, it's also important for teens to remove themselves from situations like this with potential pressure and negative influences.

Scenario 5: You and a friend are going to see a movie. When your friend picks you up in his car, he tells you that he has been vaping while his parents are away. You didn't know that your friend vaped.

A. Tell him about the dangers associated with using nicotine products.

Help students understand that it would show concern for this friend to explain the addiction risk and other hazards associated with vapes. Also discuss ways to resist or deflect the peer pressures implicit in this situation, and how students might start a conversation with a parent about the friend's behavior.

Wrapping Up:

Here are some resources to provide you and your students with more information about the dangers of electronic vapor products and other nicotine products:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Office on Smoking & Tobacco Use

- U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Center for Tobacco Products, Tobacco Education Resource Library: Vaping Prevention and Education

https://digitalmedia.hhs.gov/tobacco/educator_hub/about/for_parents?locale=en

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Know the Risks: E-Cigarettes and Young People

<https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/default.htm>

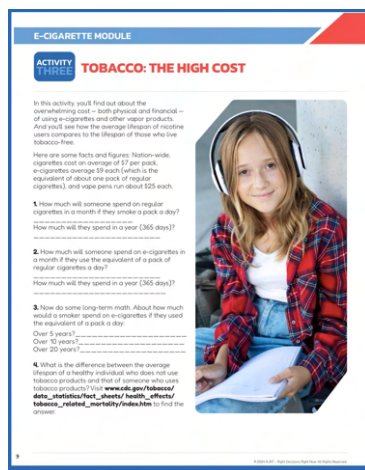


ACTIVITY THREE

ACTIVITY 3 NICOTINE: THE HIGH COST

Rationale

This activity allows students to research and calculate the high cost of using vapor and nicotine products, and to personalize that information to see how it could impact their lives right now and in the future.



Wrapping Up:

Have students expand the facts from the activity to see how they affect their health costs and spending power over the next 5, 10, and 20 years. Then ask them to consider what else that money could have been used for.

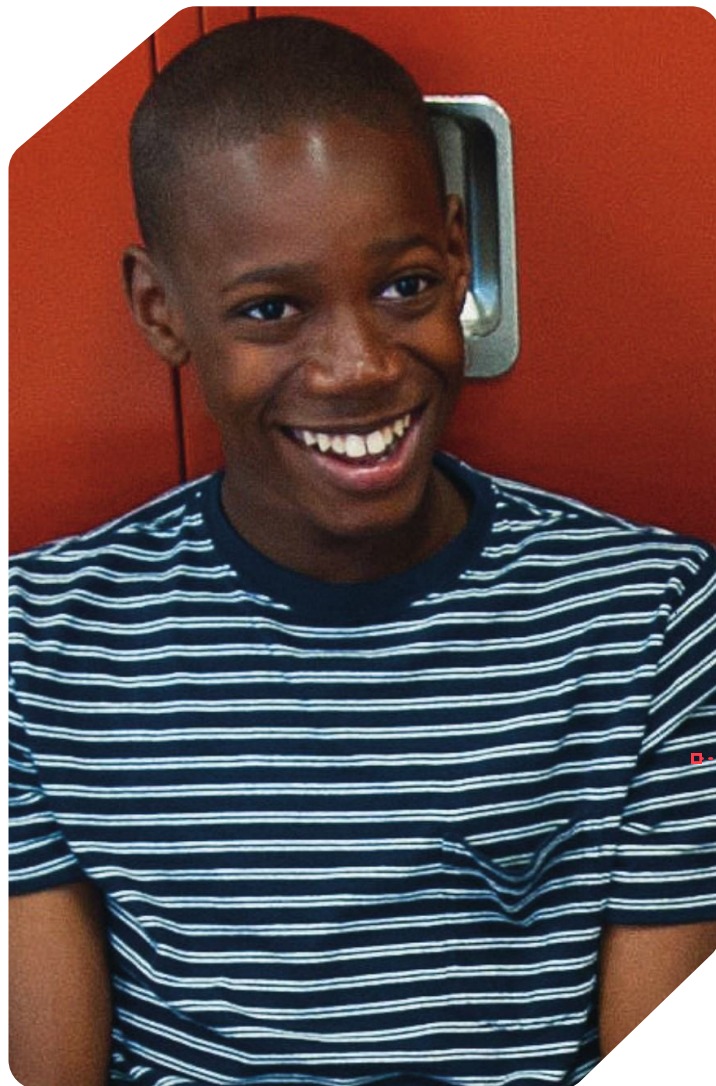
Getting Started

Tell students that nationwide, cigarettes cost an average of \$7 per pack, disposable vapes average \$9 each (which is the equivalent of about one pack of regular cigarettes), and vape pens run about \$25 each. Then explain that they will use this sheet to see how nicotine not only affects their health, but also their wallets, their ability to learn, and interpersonal relationships.

Talking About It

Answers:

1. Pack-a-day cigarette smokers will spend about \$7 a day, about \$210 a month, and more than \$2,500 annually.
2. The average vape costs \$9. This comes to an expense of about \$270 a month or \$3,285 annually.
3. A vaper would spend the following on vapes: \$16,425 over 5 years; \$32,850 over 10 years; and \$65,700 over 20 years.
4. The average lifespan of a healthy individual who does not use tobacco and nicotine products is 79 years. The average lifespan of an individual who uses tobacco and nicotine products is shortened by at least 10 years.



ACTIVITY
ONE

JUST THE FACTS

How much do you know about nicotine products, like vapes and pod mods? No matter what type of product you are talking about, they are dangerous. Take this quiz and find out. After your teacher shares the correct answers with you, use online resources to learn more about the risks of using vapor products.

TRUE OR FALSE?	TRUE	FALSE
1. The nicotine in vapes is addictive.		
2. Nicotine improves brain development.		
3. Most vapes don't contain nicotine.		
4. Exposure to vapor ingredients is harmless.		
5. Using vapor products may affect teens' ability to learn.		
6. Youth use of tobacco or nicotine in any form is unsafe.		



ACTIVITY
TWO

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Adolescence is full of peer pressure and difficult decisions. Sometimes, it's hard to know the right thing to do and it can be incredibly stressful to make positive choices. Here are some common scenarios involving nicotine products and a set of possible responses from which to choose. Read the scenarios and discuss what you should do.

SCENARIO 1

A friend offers you a vape and assures you that it won't hurt you. What would you do?

- A.** Trust your friend and try it.
- B.** Tell your friend "no thanks."
- B.** Change the subject.

SCENARIO 2

A friend, who's older than you, wants to buy vapes for you and your friends. What would you do?

- A.** Let your friend buy them and then decide whether to use them.
- B.** Say "no thanks," then tell a parent or a trusted teacher what happened.
- C.** Tell your older friend that vapes – even those that say all-natural or organic are harmful.

SCENARIO 3

You're at your friend's house after school one day. She says that she knows where her brother's vapes are and that she was wondering if you would try one with her. What would you do?

- A.** Explain to your friend the dangers of using vapes and other vapor products.
- B.** Say that you're not interested, but that if she wants to try it, you'll watch.
- C.** Say "no thanks," then tell a parent that your friend is (or may be) using nicotine products.

SCENARIO 4

You're invited to a party at the house of a classmate you don't know very well but you decide to go anyway, since your friend was also invited. When you get there, some of your classmates are using vapes. What would you do?

- A.** Stay at the party, but politely refuse any offers of vapes.
- B.** Try one of the vapes so you don't stand out.
- C.** Try to find a ride home as soon as possible.

SCENARIO 5

You and a friend are going to see a movie. When your friend picks you up in his car, he tells you that he has been vaping while his parents are away. You didn't know that your friend used vapes. What would you do?

- A.** Tell him about the dangers associated with vaping.
- B.** Say nothing because it's not your problem.
- C.** Distance yourself from this person, and if he asks, explain why.



ACTIVITY
THREE

NICOTINE: THE HIGH COST

In this activity, you'll find out about the overwhelming cost – both physical and financial – of using vapes and other nicotine products. And you'll see how the average lifespan of nicotine users compares to the lifespan of those who live tobacco and nicotine-free.

Here are some facts and figures: Nation-wide, cigarettes cost an average of \$7 per pack, disposable vapes average \$9 each (which is the equivalent of about one pack of regular cigarettes), and vape pens run about \$25 each.

1. How much will someone spend on regular cigarettes in a month if they smoke a pack a day?

How much will they spend in a year (365 days)?

2. How much will someone spend on vapes in a month if they use the equivalent of a pack of regular cigarettes a day?

How much will they spend in a year (365 days)?

3. Now do some long-term math. About how much would a someone spend on vapes if they used the equivalent of a pack a day:

Over 5 years? _____

Over 10 years? _____

Over 20 years? _____

4. What is the difference between the average lifespan of a healthy individual who does not use tobacco or nicotine products and that of someone who does?

