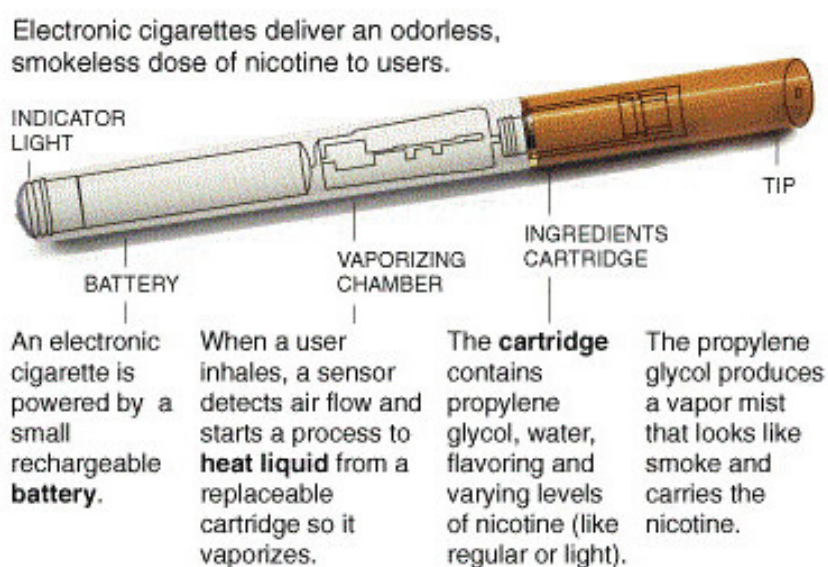


Electronic Cigarettes (E-cigs)

Electronic cigarettes (e-cigs) are designed to look and feel like cigarettes. They have been marketed as a healthier alternative to cigarettes and for use in places where smoking is not allowed as they do not produce smoke.

E-cigs deliver nicotine in aerosol form without the hazards that accompany tobacco smoking. Nicotine itself has minimal health impacts so e-cigarettes have the potential to dramatically reduce the harm to smokers who cannot or don't want to give up their cigarettes.

A typical e-cig looks like this:



However, e-cigarettes are not a medicinal product and therefore in the UK it is currently illegal to sell them as a quit smoking aid unless they are licensed as a medicine by the Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Authority (MHRA). In June 2013 a report from the MHRA stated that electronic cigarettes will be licensed as a medicine in the UK from 2016, under new regulations. The MHRA concluded that e-cigarettes currently on the market do not meet appropriate standards of safety, quality and efficacy. There will be no compulsory licensing of the products until 2016 but until then they are not recommended for use. NHS Stop Smoking Services have a very strong evidence base for the support and medication they provide, and there are plenty of options available, even if a smoker has tried quitting before. Services are free (apart from if you pay for prescriptions), which is cheaper than buying e-cigarettes and quitters also get the support of a Stop Smoking Advisor.

We currently recommend that E-cigs are not used in pregnancy.

Information for professionals overleaf...

If a client is already using an e-cig and wants to stop using it:

- ◆ You can advise the client to reduce the strength and/or amount of e-cigs over time
- ◆ Alternatively the client could set a quit date and use NRT instead
- ◆ However, you cannot record a client using an e-cig on the Stop Smoking Service monitoring form/QuitManager.

If a client is using an e-cig and doesn't want to stop smoking:

- ◆ Advise the client that although e-cigarettes have the potential to dramatically reduce the harm to smokers who cannot or don't want to give up their cigarettes we can't guarantee that they are totally safe and that the only way to ensure they avoid harm is to stop smoking any type of cigarette.

If a client wants to use an e-cig as a stop smoking aid:

- ◆ You can provide support with the usual appointment schedule and behavioural support.
- ◆ Advise the client that we currently do not have any evidence of the effectiveness of e-cigs as a stop smoking aid.
- ◆ Ensure the client is aware of all the proven stop smoking aids available on the NHS that are recommended by NICE.
- ◆ Record the advice given on the client's records.
- ◆ Although there is a cost saving of using e-cigs (the average annual cost of using an electronic cigarette is only £528.78 for the first year and £485.28 for subsequent years compared with around £2,685 a year for cigarettes). NHS stop smoking aids are either free if the client doesn't pay for prescriptions (or £29.10 for a 3 month pre-pay certificate which can be ordered at 0300 330 1341) or up to £250 for 12 weeks supply with no further payments.

Use in Pregnancy:

- ◆ We currently do not recommend that e-cigs are used in pregnancy.

Use of E-cigs in Workplaces

- ◆ We do not currently have enough information on the contents of the vapour from e-cigs to say that this is safe to be inhaled and therefore do not recommend their use in workplaces (inside buildings). If another member of staff exposed to the vapour complains about being exposed and asked for information on their safety we could not currently say that the workplace has done everything to protect that person's health. This therefore falls under Health and Safety legislation. The only way to ensure others' safety from exposure to e-cig vapour is to exclude it from the workplace. In practical terms this just means regarding e-cigs as the same as tobacco cigarettes and applying the Smokefree policy of only smoking outside at agreed times as per your own policy.
- ◆ It is possible that in the future e-cigs will be found to be safe but until then we advise to err on the safe side.
- ◆ Nicotine replacement inhalators do not emit any vapour and therefore are perfectly safe to be used inside a building.

For any queries about e-cigs contact us on the number below.