

## E-cigarettes – information for stop smoking services

The use of e-cigarettes is growing rapidly in New Zealand, as it is in other countries. Smokers are more likely than non-smokers to report they are currently using or have tried e-cigarettes.

The long-term health risks associated with e-cigarettes are still unknown but evidence suggests they are much lower than the risks associated with tobacco smoking. As such it is expected that health risks will reduce significantly for smokers who switch to vaping.

### [The law on the sale of e-cigarettes is set to change](#)

Currently in New Zealand the only e-cigarettes that retailers can legally sell are e-cigarettes that do not contain nicotine and do not resemble a tobacco cigarette. People can legally buy nicotine containing e-cigarettes or e-liquid, for personal use, online.

This situation is set to change. In March 2017 the Government decided that it will legalise the sale and supply of nicotine-containing e-cigarettes and e-liquid subject to various controls. The Government intends to change the law so that retailers can sell these products in New Zealand, provided they comply with the controls.

Under the new controls on the sale of e-cigarettes/e-liquid:

- people will not be able to use any type of e-cigarette (regardless of nicotine content) in smoke free areas like bars and restaurants
- retailers will not be able to sell any type of e-cigarette (regardless of nicotine content) to people aged under 18 years
- e-cigarette advertising will have some restrictions, but these will be less strict than the rules around advertising tobacco.

For more information, read the [Cabinet paper on the proposed controls](#).

To legalise the sale of e-cigarettes and e-liquid that contain nicotine, Parliament needs to make changes to the Smoke-free Environments Act 1990. Before Parliament makes these changes, a select committee will consider the changes that the Government has proposed. Anyone can make a submission to the select committee on the proposed changes. It is unlikely that any changes will become law until late 2018.

### [Stop smoking services should support people using e-cigarettes](#)

Where people want to use e-cigarettes to help them in their quit attempt, stop smoking services should support them, such as through face-to-face or telephone support.

All staff of Ministry of Health–funded stop smoking services must complete the Stop Smoking Practitioner Programme training (delivered by the National Training Service), whether or not your clients are using e-cigarettes.

### [E-cigarettes are not a stop smoking medicine](#)

Ministry of Health–funded stop smoking services should not supply e-cigarettes to their clients because they are not an approved stop-smoking medicine. But it is still important to know about e-cigarettes as one way of supporting people to stop smoking because an increasing number of smokers are using e-cigarettes to help them quit.

If an e-cigarette manufacturer wants to sell an e-cigarette as a stop smoking medicine, it will have to go through the medicines approval regime run by Medsafe. Stop smoking medicines, such as nicotine replacement therapy, have already gone through this process so that they are now a stop smoking medicine that the Ministry of Health funds. To date, no one in New Zealand has applied for approval of an e-cigarette as a stop smoking medicine.

### E-liquid ingredients and safety

The ingredients of the e-liquid used in e-cigarettes may vary, but most contain nicotine, propylene glycol and vegetable glycerine, as well as flavouring agents.

The nicotine in e-liquid poses relatively little danger to smokers; however, in excessive amounts, it can be lethal, especially for children. E-liquid should be kept out of reach of children to prevent accidental poisoning.

### E-cigarette vapour

Nicotine is delivered to the user in the vapour. The amount of nicotine that e-cigarettes deliver to the user depends, however, on a number of different factors including the concentration of nicotine in the e-liquid, the heating of the e-liquid, the other constituents of the e-liquid, and the technique of the user.

Some toxins have been found in e-cigarette vapour. However, when e-cigarettes are used within normal operating levels (ie, not overheated), these toxins are generally present at very low levels – many times lower than in tobacco smoke.

The risks from second-hand vapour are unknown at this stage, however second-hand vapour is known to be less harmful than second-hand smoke.

### Concurrent use of e-cigarettes and stop smoking medicines

Some people may choose to use e-cigarettes as well as stop smoking medicines at the same time. There are no known harms of this practice.

Evidence is limited on the effectiveness of e-cigarettes compared with NRT. Results from the one trial conducted showed that e-cigarettes were equally as good as nicotine patches in helping people stop smoking.

### E-cigarettes are electrical products and should be treated as such

Some reports indicate malfunctioning e-cigarettes have caused harm (eg, burns when e-cigarettes have exploded). In many cases, the problem has been a malfunctioning or overheated battery. People should treat e-cigarettes like other electrical products (eg, mobile phones) and follow the instructions for care and charging.

### More information about e-cigarettes

The [Ministry of Health website](#) keeps up-to-date information on e-cigarettes. Other useful sources are:

- [Cabinet paper on the proposed controls](#)
- [Cancer Research UK's policy on e-cigarettes](#)
- [Public Health England documents on e-cigarettes.](#)

Specialist vape shops in your region may also have information about the products they sell.