

Briefing Note on Vaping among Youth and Young Adults

1. Policy/Regulation

UBC's Policy 15: This policy prohibits the sale and promotion of tobacco on campus, smoking in enclosed spaces and UBC vehicles and that smoking is to occur within designated smoking areas. This was approved in 1991 and the last revision was in 2019. Although this policy includes vaping, language is unclear regarding vaping regulations, as not all vaping products are considered 'tobacco-related products' by campus community members. On the UBC Okanagan campus vaping is restricted to designated gazebos.

The Tobacco and Vapour Act of BC has a buffer zone around all doorways, open windows and air intakes to 6 metres. This act includes vaping.

2. Quick Facts

- 2.1 In May 2018 the Tobacco and Vaping Products Act was passed which made it legal for adults to purchase vaping products as a less harmful way of using tobacco than other methods (e.g., cigarettes), with the goal of quitting altogether (Government of Canada, 2019a).
- 2.2 The Tobacco and Vaping Products Act aims to reduce tobacco use to less than 5% by 2035. As part of this commitment, the government allocated \$330 million to address tobacco use from 2018 – 2023 (Government of Canada, 2019a).
- 2.3 Among Canadians who used a vaping product in the past 30 days, 65% are current smokers and 20% are former smokers. 15% reported having never smoked cigarettes (Government of Canada, 2018).
- 2.4 Youth (15 to 19 years) and young adults (20 to 24 years) have the highest rates of trying vaping compared to adults 25 years and older (Government of Canada, 2018).
- 2.5 A 2016-17 survey showed that: 23% of students in grades 7-12 had tried vaping, 10% reported using vaping products within the last 30 days, and most students who had tried vaping had also tried a cigarette. 53% of all students thought it would be easy to acquire a vaping product (Government of Canada, 2018).
- 2.6 Vaping in those 16-19 years of age increased by 74% from 2017 to 2018 (8.4% to 14.6%). It is important to note that the substances being vaped can contain high amounts of nicotine (Hammond et al., 2019). This same study found that cigarette smoking increased in this same time period by 45%. These results support concerns that e-cigarette/vaping delivery systems increase the potential for nicotine addiction and the move to smoking cigarettes. Calls for restrictions on the marketing of vaping products (including the use of flavours) have resulted (Hammond et al., 2019).
- 2.7 Although vaping nicotine is less harmful than smoking, it is not without health risks. The new delivery systems (i.e., slim, high-tech devices that use nicotine cartridges or pods and come in a variety of flavours - such as JUUL) use benzoic acid and nicotine salt technology to deliver higher concentrations of nicotine than the traditional e-cigarettes (Omariye, McWhirter, Luo, Pankow, & Talbot, 2019). Vaping nicotine can alter brain development, impair memory and concentration, reduce impulse control, cause cognitive and behavioural problems, and lead to nicotine dependence (Government of Canada, 2019b). Vapes also includes ultra-fine particles and potentially harmful chemicals that are inhaled into the lungs, increasing the risk of respiratory disease (Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, 2017; Czoli et al., 2019). The long-term health effects of vaping products are still unknown.

3. Recent Recommendations with Respect to Vaping

- 3.1 Health Canada wrote a letter to vaping product retailers in June 2019 outlining their responsibilities. This highlighted the prohibition of:
“1. Furnishing vaping products to young persons. 2. Advertising of vaping products appealing to young persons. 3. Lifestyle advertising of vaping products 4. Promotion of vaping products through testimonials or endorsements. 5. Promotion of vaping product flavours appealing to young persons” (p.1, Government of Canada, 2019c).
- 3.2 The Clean Air Coalition of BC recommends campuses become smoke-free (Clean Air Coalition, 2014).
- 3.3 On June 21, 2019, BC’s Health minister Adrian Dix called for federal regulatory action to address the sudden upsurge in vaping and tobacco consumption among youth (Boynton, 2019). He suggested that the province will introduce its own initiatives if there are delays in federal action.

4. How Other Universities are Addressing Vaping

- 4.1 Canadian universities have undertaken initiatives to address concerns around tobacco smoke. For example, 65 post-secondary institutions in Canada are now 100% smoke-free (Canadian Cancer Society, 2018). Most institutions have addressed vaping by including it in their tobacco policies (E.g., UBC, Brock University, McMaster University, Ryerson University, University of Northern British Columbia, etc.).
- 4.2 A report from the Ontario Tobacco Research Institute outlined the findings of a review on vaping interventions. This review shows that there are very few formal interventions, and of the interventions that do exist, they are aimed at middle and high school students in the US (O’Connor, Pelletier, Bayoumy, & Schwartz, 2019). There is a lack of evidence regarding interventions or strategies for university students.

5. UBCO Initiatives Related to Vaping

5.1 Campus Health in collaboration with UBCO Operations and Risk Management conducted observations of smoking and vaping gazebos. Vaping was observed most frequently at the ARTS gazebo. Anecdotal reports of students vaping unobtrusively in classrooms, in residence rooms and outside of designated areas were shared by members of the campus community. A full report of the gazebo observations can be found at <http://campushealth.ok.ubc.ca/2019/05/15/patterns-of-cannabis-and-tobacco-smoking-and-vaping-at-ubc-okanagan/>

5.2 A strategy to address the needs of the UBCO campus related to vaping is under development. Options being considered include the following:

- Opportunities for students to inform message development and delivery preferences
- Dissemination of evidence-based information about electronic delivery systems, vaping products, potential health effects, risk of nicotine addiction, etc. and strategies to support positive attitudes toward vape-free lifestyles
- Student-hosted dialogues on vaping on campus
- Resources and support for cessation among users of tobacco and/or vaping products
- Monitoring patterns in vaping/e-cigarette use by including questions in institutional surveys, conducting observations of vaping on campus, etc.

- Opportunities for students to engage in advocacy for improved regulatory frameworks for the sale and marketing of vaping/e-cigarette products

6. Vaping Resources

Health Canada – offers online resources on what vaping is and how to address it with teenagers.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/smoking-tobacco/vaping.html> Information about the risks of vaping is also provided by Health Canada <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/smoking-tobacco/vaping/risks.html>

Health Link BC – offers online resources on what vaping is, how to have conversations about it, and provides links to organizations aimed at helping people quit. <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-feature/vaping>

Interior Health – has prepared a fact sheet for parents.

<https://www.interiorhealth.ca/sites/Partners/TobaccoResources/Documents/Vaping%20and%20Youth.pdf>

QuitNow BC – offers online resources, professional quit coaches to provide cessation support by phone, instant chat, or text messages. <https://www.quitnow.ca/>

The B.C. Smoking Cessation Program helps eligible B.C. residents who wish to stop smoking or using other tobacco products by:

- covering 100% of the cost of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products (specific nicotine gum, lozenges, patches, inhaler), or
- contributing to the cost of specific smoking cessation prescription drugs.

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