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E-Cigarettes Gateway to Conventional Cigarette Smoking

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A new report by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, Medical shows there is “substantial” evidence that e-cigarette use increases the risk of transitioning to smoking conventional cigarettes.

This is of particular concern for teens who are in the group with the highest number of users. This “gateway” effect should concern parents and users alike who believe e-cigarettes are different because they lack combustible elements.

The study also revealed the risk levels for addiction/dependence on e-cigarettes as follows:

- “Substantial evidence that e-cigarette use results in symptoms of dependence on e-cigarettes.
- Moderate evidence that risk and severity of dependence is lower for e-cigarettes than for conventional cigarettes.”

The report revealed there is still a lack of knowledge about risk levels for certain health conditions because e-cigarettes have not been on the market long enough for exhaustive studies. For example, the report showed a lack of information to determine if e-cigarettes do or do not cause cancer, respiratory disease, and developmental defects.

Contrary to a New York Times article on the report, it did not state there was “conclusive proof that the devices are safer than traditional smoking products.” It did state that e-cigarette use reduces exposure to the harmful agents in conventional cigarettes—but have their own set of potentially toxic, physically harmful, substances. And, much like second-hand smoke, the second-hand vapors were shown to “increase airborne concentrations of particulate matter and nicotine in indoor environments compared with background levels.”

As known from the number of devastating injuries reported, there is [conclusive evidence that e-cigarettes can explode](#) and cause burns and projectile injuries. The e-cigarette liquids are also dangerous in that exposure, even from skin contact, can result in poisoning with seizures, anoxic brain injuries or even death.

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