

Oncology News



....*More than medicine*

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E Cigarettes- A Smokeless Cloud of Uncertainty

By Diana M. Seaders, PA-C

Folks are constantly on the lookout for ways to stop smoking cigarettes. Many have turned to the electronic cigarette, more commonly referred to as “e-cigarette” for smoking cessation. The question is: Are they helping? This month’s newsletter is a look into the hazy cloud of smokeless cigarettes.

What are they?

Smokeless cigarettes, commonly referred to as E-cigarettes, are small tubular devices that vaporize a nicotine based liquid into an aerosol, giving the appearance of cigarette smoke. Though these devices do not use tobacco, they do use varying concentrations of nicotine, which is habit-forming.

Emerging Issues:

Though conclusive data on health related effects of E-cigarettes is still pending, we know that the use of this product has increased and nicotine addiction along with it. Accord-

ing to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), E-cigarette use has quadrupled from 2009 to 2010. E-cigarettes can be used in many places that traditional cigarettes are restricted and can currently be

sold to minors. Hundreds of varieties are available in different shapes, colors, and flavors

making them very appealing to youths and adults alike. The CDC has concluded that U.S. middle school and high school students have doubled their use of this product during 2011-2012.

The Food and Drug Administration has not yet regulated E-cigarettes as a tobacco product, resulting in no set

safety standards for uniformity or truth-in-labeling requirements. In addition, the CDC reported that E-cigarette related calls to poison centers have increased from just 1 per month in September 2010 to 215 per month in February 2014! Over half of



calls placed to poison centers were for children under 5 years old that had come into contact with the nicotine based liquid and the remaining calls were for people age 20 and over.

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At this time, it has not been documented that e-cigarettes have been successful with smoking cessation. In fact, there is evidence supporting that e-cigarettes may actually be perpetuating the cigarette habit for many smokers (CDC).

How to Quit? There's an app for that!

Fortunately, there are resources and tools for those individuals who are determined to eliminate cigarettes from their lives. In addition to the traditional methods of quitting which include: Call lines, nicotine patches, medication, friends, and medical providers, determined quitters can now use text messaging for encouragement. According to a recent story on National Public Radio (NPR), people can even use their cell phone to find inspiration as they give up the smoking habit. A publicly available Web-based program called "Text2Quit" actually sends personalized texts and emails as an attempt to aid in the difficult journey. During periods of discouragement, people can text keywords like "CRAVE" or "STATS" to receive tips about fighting cravings, an update on their health progress, or even a trivia game they can play to distract them from cigarette craving. While there is a fee for "Text2Quit", there is also a free app, actually called "FREE" that functions in a similar fashion. It even allows you to upload photos of your personal reasons for quitting. The FREE app will store these photos and flash them as a reminder of why you are quitting when you are tempted to smoke.

