

BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO VAPING

Lets start with the habit.

You smoke because you are addicted to nicotine, but that's about half of it. The truth is you have been sticking a cigarette in your mouth 200-600 times a day, for how many years? You enjoy the feeling and all that satisfying smoke to manipulate as it flows from your mouth. The nicotine is just a by-product of that. It's the tactile ceremony you have been performing for all those years that keeps you doing it. We are creatures of habit. The nicotine is probably ½ of it. If you quit, there are some symptoms associated with nicotine withdrawal, but the thing you miss the most is the relaxing act of smoking. That is why 90% of smoking cessation products fail and 70% of ecig users succeed.

After a few weeks of vaping, when you try a cigarette, you taste it for what it is: burning stuff!

E-cigarettes will still give you that, and the nicotine, but in a safer form. You are not quitting smoking, just swapping your addiction to a much safer one. You will feel the benefits very quickly. The only negative side effect is you occasionally feel a little dry in the throat. If you stick with it, you will also experience some coughing in the 2nd or 3rd week. This is your lungs shedding the tar build up that has formed there, and only lasts 2-3 days – mostly at night. It's a good thing.

Now that you understand what you are getting yourself into, here's how it works. The ecig is comprised of three components. The cartridge, atomizer, and battery. All e-cigs are basically the same.

Vaping is a bit different from smoking, you need to draw slowly and lightly. Unlike cigarettes, a hard puff is not going to increase vapor production. Fill your mouth slowly, it can take from 3-5 seconds, inhale and immediately exhale. Sometimes you may need to take a couple primer puffs to get the flow going. With just a little practice you'll be blowing out big clouds of safe, clean vapor that will evaporate in seconds, leaving no trace.

THE CARTRIDGE

The mouthpiece in the ecig when you get it is a blank, you must insert a fresh cartridge from the box in your kit. The cartridge is a plastic mouthpiece that contains a polyfill fiber wadding, much like what is in your pillow. The fibers are aligned to allow maximum flow of liquid. This is saturated with a solution of propylene glycol, (a food additive, regarded as safe by the FDA), flavoring, and nicotine. You can get this solution, (e-liquid) in many flavors and strengths of nicotine.

The cartridges that come in your starter kit vary from high to no nicotine. The strength of nicotine is determined by the amount in 1ml of fluid. The reasoning behind this is that when first introduced, the average cartridge was thought to be equal to one pack of cigarettes, and it holds on average 1ml of fluid. The average cigarette contains 1mg of nicotine. Thus if you are using 20mg liquid strength, and your cartridge contains 1ml, the draws you take will equal the same nicotine as a cigarette. Experience has shown that a cartridge does not last that long unless it is done on a timed basis, so many draws per hour, etc.

You will find that you vape more than you smoked. There is nothing to stop you like before when it burned down.

Cartridges differ in size, but are a good way to measure the strength of the liquid. The wadding of the cartridge, when inserted, is always in contact with the atomizer, and the liquid flows slowly onto it.

Keep your cartridge juicy, it should look like a slushy when full, not like a pool. The amount of drops you add is determined by how dry it is. Usually 2-4 will do the trick. Letting it get too dry can cause a burnt taste and ultimately burn out your atomizer coil, overfilling can cause leakage below the atomizer and reduced vapor. It can also cause you to draw some into you mouth. Don't panic, just spit it out. It won't hurt you in such small doses. You will eventually find the balance – it's not that hard.

You can change the flavor of a cartridge. Simply remove the filler with some tweezers and fold it into a paper towel until it is dry, then fill the empty cart halfway with the desired juice. Reinsert the filler being careful to keep the fibers aligned, then top it off. It only takes a minute.

THE ATOMIZER

The atomizer is a stainless steel tube with a ceramic pot inside containing a heating coil. It is the brilliant technological part. It has an arched steel band on top that protects it. It, as well as the pot, is wrapped in 2 or 3 layers of stainless steel cloth. It also has high temp wicking material that connects the arched band to the coil. The steel cloth acts as a wick as well, ensuring that the coil and pot are always surrounded in fluid. When you take a draw, it activates the battery and heats the coil, thereby vaporizing the fluid. Nothing is burning, you are merely boiling the fluid, and inhaling the vapor. It's just a vaporized liquid. It is important that this coil stays saturated in fluid, if not, it will burn the residue, taste bad, and eventually burn out like a light bulb filament. These are however, fairly sturdy components. It takes a lot to burn them out. You will know when the fluid is low by the lack of vapor and the taste. You can tell when its time to set it down for a few minutes when it becomes hot to the touch.

THE BATTERY

The battery is a lithium ion 3.6 volt rechargeable. It can last up to 3 months. It has a computer chip and a little silicone flap connected to contacts that activate it. Depending on the model you buy they come in from 150 mAh to 280 mAh. The mAh rating determines how long it will last between charges. Since the switch is activated by drawing on the atomizer, there must be airflow, hence the liquid, if overfilled, can get into the battery and mess up the function of the switch. It also has a computer chip inside that shuts it down if you have taken a draw exceeding 5 seconds or if the voltage is low and it needs recharging. There is a LED at the end that will flash if either of these occur, and lights steadily during a draw. The biggest problem with the battery is the liquid getting into it. It can make it short the switch out or make it sporadic in function. Make sure you keep the connections clean by wiping them with a paper towel.

If the battery is malfunctioning, try blowing into the end of it by mouth or with a can of air. Tap it on the table a few times lightly to dislodge any fluid that might be impeding the contacts. Wipe it clean and try it again.

There are also the manual batteries which contain a small button you press during a draw. These tend to have less problems than the autos but prohibit hands free operation and usually don't last as long between charges. They are very popular because you can take as long a draw as you like, and are less likely to malfunction. The only problem we are having is with the 801 and 901 manual batteries. They just came out with them and they're not perfect yet. The little button can pop out when wiping it. I always include an extra one, so if you lose it, it's OK.

The Chargers have an LED light that is supposed to tell you when it is charged, but they are not reliable. I suggest you charge the battery for at least 3 hours when it is dead, regardless of the light, this way you will get the most out of your battery.

E-LIQUID

E-liquid is sold online on many sites, it comes in a variety of strengths and flavors, from 36mg down to 0mg. It is recommended to start with a medium strength, (similar to a real cig) and work your way down to 0mg. Then the only habit you have is the hand to mouth. You can work on that at your own leisure once you have beaten the nicotine.

I have found that while some flavors are cool and amusing, they're not something you'll want to use all day. While the smoke/vapor can be accurately reproduced, its impossible to make it taste exactly like a burning weed. However, the flavors are close enough to satisfy you. If you are a menthol smoker, try the menthol juice, many users swear by it, and many find other flavors to take its place. If you're not, you have a lot more choices, it's really up to your palette.

If you want to start over with a new flavor, take the wadding out of the cartridge and roll it in a paper towel until the liquid is gone from it. Then, fill the cartridge half way with the desired liquid. Re-insert the wadding into the cartridge and top it off until it is saturated.

E-cigs do not last forever, you will be lucky if you get one that lasts 3 months. Still, if you have to buy one every 2-3 months, the money you save on cigarettes and the health benefits are well worth it.

If this works for you, I recommend that you always have 2 at any given time. You won't go without this way.

There is a wealth of information to be found on the net. For recipes of do it yourself e-liquid go to www.e-cigarette-forum.com and type "recipe" in the search area.

For questions or to talk with other vapers go to www.vaportalk.com

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

This is the new vocabulary for the e-smoker:

- Vaper - a person that uses an e-cig, as in "I'm a vaper."
- Vape - verb as in, "do you vape?"
- Analog - a real tobacco cigarette
- Cart - cartridge containing e-liquid
- Batt - battery
- Man Batt - manual battery
- Atty - atomizer
- Pen Style - an e-cig generally longer than 150cm, looks like pen.
- Mini - an ecig generally longer than 110cm, larger in diameter than a super mini.
- Super Mini - the smallest, usually from 80 to 110cm. closest size to an analog.