

Guidance for Clinicians' Discussions of E-Cigarettes With Patient

Recommendations:

- Emphasize to smokers the importance of the goal of *complete* cessation of all combustible tobacco products. Even a single cigarette per day increases cardiovascular risk.
 - Recommend that smokers use evidence-based, FDA-approved smoking cessation aids, which are known to be safe and effective.
 - Clinicians should be prepared to discuss the evidence about e-cigarettes' risks and benefits with patients who ask about them.
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Points to cover in a discussion with a patient who asks about e-cigarettes:

- E-cigarettes are devices that heat a nicotine-containing liquid, producing an aerosol that differs from the smoke produced by burning tobacco.
 - E-cigarettes contain chemicals in addition to nicotine, including propylene glycol, glycerin, and flavoring chemicals that may pose a risk.
 - Because they do not burn tobacco, e-cigarettes expose the user to fewer and lower levels of toxic compounds than smoking a cigarette does.
 - Therefore, if used as a complete substitute for combustible tobacco products, e-cigarettes are expected to be less harmful than smoking combustible tobacco products in the short-term, but their long-term safety is uncertain.
 - Because e-cigarettes are new products, scientific information about their health effects and effectiveness to help smokers quit is limited and rapidly evolving. They are not currently approved by the FDA as safe and effective cessation aids.
 - E-cigarettes vary considerably in their design, in the contents of the e-liquids, and in nicotine and toxicant delivery to the user.
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If smoker chooses to use e-cigarettes, provide evidence-based advice:

- Switch completely to e-cigarettes. Avoid dual use of both combustible tobacco products and e-cigarettes.
 - The eventual goal is cessation of e-cigarettes as well as combustible cigarettes, because of uncertainty about e-cigarettes' long-term health risks. After stopping combustible tobacco, plan to taper off e-cigarettes.
 - Heed safety instructions. Choose products with child-proof packaging to minimize the risk of nicotine poisoning of children. Follow instructions for device maintenance, battery recharging, and storage to minimize the risk of explosion.
 - Avoid using e-cigarettes around children.
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FDA = U.S. Food and Drug Administration.