

# PROTECT YOURSELF FROM EXPOSURE

If someone is vaping around you, try:

- Moving to another area
- Politely asking them not to vape nearby
- Avoiding enclosed spaces where people vape
- Choosing smoke-free and vape-free environments
- Speaking to a trusted adult, teacher, supervisor, or healthcare provider if exposure continues

Everyone deserves clean air.



# HEALTHIER AIR IS POSSIBLE

If you or someone you know is struggling with nicotine or vaping dependence:

- SAMHSA National Helpline  
1-800-662-HELP (4357): Free, confidential, 24/7
- Talk with a doctor, counselor, or school health professional
- Visit the website [teen.SmokeFree.gov](http://teen.SmokeFree.gov) for quitting tools and support

**Awareness and action can save lives.**

# TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Secondhand vape aerosol is only harmless water vapor.  
A. True                      B. False
2. Vape aerosol may contain nicotine and harmful chemicals.  
A. True                      B. False
3. Chemicals from vaping can remain on surfaces after vaping stops.  
A. True                      B. False
4. Sweet-smelling vape clouds are always safe to breathe.  
A. True                      B. False
5. Children and people with asthma may be more sensitive to vape aerosol exposure.  
A. True                      B. False

Answers: B, A, A, A, B, A

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# SECONDHAND VAPING EXPOSURE



**STAY SAFE SERIES**

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**NOT JUST VAPOR.  
NOT JUST YOUR CHOICE.**

## What is SECONDHAND VAPE EXPOSURE?

Secondhand vape exposure happens when a person breathes in aerosol released from e-cigarettes or vape devices used by others.

Many people mistakenly believe vape aerosol is “just water vapor,” but it can contain harmful substances such as:

- Nicotine
- Heavy metals like lead and nickel
- Cancer-causing chemicals
- Ultrafine particles that can enter deep into the lungs
- Flavoring chemicals linked to lung irritation

When someone vapes nearby, people around them may inhale these chemicals without choosing to.

## Vaping around others AFFECTS EVERYONE

You may think vaping only affects the person using the device, but the aerosol released into the air can impact nearby:

- Friends
- Classmates
- Coworkers
- Children
- Family members

Many vape aerosols contain nicotine, which is highly addictive and can affect adolescent brain development.

Just because vape clouds smell fruity or sweet does not mean they are safe.



## SHORT-TERM EFFECTS

Breathing secondhand vape aerosol may cause:

- Coughing
- Throat irritation
- Headaches or dizziness
- Shortness of breath
- Eye irritation
- Increased heart rate and blood pressure
- Worsening asthma symptoms



Children, teens, pregnant individuals, and people with lung conditions may be especially sensitive to exposure.

## LONG TERM EFFECTS

Researchers are still studying the long-term effects of vape aerosol exposure, but repeated exposure may contribute to:

- Lung inflammation
- Damage to developing lungs and brains in adolescents
- Increased nicotine dependence risk
- Cardiovascular stress
- Exposure to toxic chemicals over time

Some vaping products have also been found to release metals and chemicals that may increase health risks with repeated exposure.

## THIRDHAND EXPOSURE

Even after the visible vapor disappears, chemicals from vaping can remain on:

- Clothing
- Furniture
- Car seats
- Walls and floors
- Skin and hair



This leftover chemical residue is called thirdhand exposure. People — especially infants and children — may still be exposed when they touch contaminated surfaces or breathe in particles left behind indoors.

## LILY'S STORY

Lily was a 14-year-old student who spent a lot of time with friends after school. A few of them vaped regularly, especially during car rides and while hanging out indoors. They told her it was harmless because she wasn't the one vaping.

At first, Lily didn't think much about it. The clouds smelled fruity, and everyone around her acted like it was no big deal.

But after several weeks, Lily started noticing changes. She developed frequent headaches and a cough that wouldn't go away. During basketball practice, she felt short of breath much faster than usual.

Lily had asthma as a child, and being around vape aerosol seemed to make her breathing worse again.

One afternoon, after riding in a car filled with vape aerosol, Lily became dizzy and had trouble catching her breath. Her parents took her to a doctor, who explained that secondhand vape exposure can irritate the lungs and expose people nearby to nicotine and harmful chemicals.

Lily was surprised to learn that even though she never vaped herself, the aerosol around her could still affect her health.

Now, Lily chooses vape-free environments whenever possible and speaks up when someone vapes around her.

Breathing clean air should never depend on someone else's choices.

