

Health concerns swirl around electronic cigarettes

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With sales of electronic cigarettes, or "e-cigarettes," on the rise and expected to hit \$1.5 billion this year, concerns over potential health risks of using the trendy devices are also gaining momentum and political clout. An article in *Chemical & Engineering News* (C&EN), the weekly magazine of the American Chemical Society, delves into what scientists and regulators are doing about e-cigarettes, which are now being cleverly marketed under more appealing names such as hookah pens and vape pipes.

The battery-powered devices deliver an inhalable vapor, with or without nicotine. Deirdre Lockwood, a C&EN contributing editor, notes that they are often viewed as a safer—and tastier—alternative to smoking cigarettes. Users can choose from an impressive variety of flavors, from key lime pie to black honey tobacco. Some try smoking or "vaping" with the devices as a way to help wean themselves off of tobacco cigarettes, which deliver a toxic cocktail of substances linked to cancer. Although some researchers think the devices are a safer alternative for tobacco smokers, recent studies on the contents of e-cigarette vapor raise concerns about health impacts on users and the public. And regulators, at least at the state and local levels, are taking action.

The article notes that one study has found small amounts of six toxic substances in the vapor of several different e-cigarette brands. Scientists have also detected in the vapor low levels of cadmium, nickel and lead, which can trigger lung and throat inflammation when inhaled. Additionally, because nicotine from the vapor can mix with other

compounds in the air to form cancer-causing substances, researchers say parents who vape should be particularly aware of [potential health risks](#) to their children. Currently, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration does not regulate the products, but several states and dozens of counties and cities have banned the use of [e-cigarettes](#) wherever tobacco smoking is prohibited. At least nine states have outlawed the sale of the devices to minors.

More information: "Controversy Clouds E-cigarettes"
cen.acs.org/articles/92/i10/Controversy-Clouds-E-Cigarettes.html

Provided by American Chemical Society

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