

## E- cigarettes: Breathing life into a dying industry

Like many smokers, Dan wants to quit. He has heard that electronic cigarettes, also known as e-cigarettes, eCigs or vapour cigarettes, might be helpful. But with all the controversy about them in the news and on the internet, he isn't sure.

Dan is skeptical, he has noticed e-cigarettes are not just sold in pharmacies like other quit smoking aids. They can be found at convenience stores and gas stations often strategically placed near conventional cigarettes. Dan also knows that tobacco companies are making them and he doesn't trust that they would make a product to help people quit smoking.

Dan also wonders how they can help smokers quit when they look and act like regular cigarettes. He has heard that quitting smoking can be as difficult as quitting heroin but he also knows that when people are trying to quit injecting heroin doctors don't prescribe a drug delivered through a needle.

E-cigarettes are cigarette shaped tubes that simulate the sensation of smoking. Batteries in the tubes heat up a fluid filled cartridge that gives off a vapour which looks like smoke. Although the jury is still out on e-cigarettes, there are health and safety concerns that Dan should be aware of.

Health Canada recently advised Canadians not to purchase electronic cigarettes because they have not been fully evaluated for safety. (<http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/recall-alert-rappel-avis/hc-sc/2009/13373a-eng.php>).

There are concerns that electronic cigarettes may make smoking socially acceptable again, especially if used in smoke free places. Because e-cigarettes release a vapour and not smoke, there are currently very few rules about where they can and can't be used. The result is e-cigarettes being used in places where smoking has been banned like classrooms, pubs and shopping malls.

E-cigarettes might encourage young people to start smoking. In Canada, e-cigarettes cannot contain nicotine but they can contain kid-friendly flavours ranging from bacon to bubble gum. Flavouring that could encourage youth to smoke e-cigarettes as well as real tobacco products.

Dan decides e-cigarettes are not worth the risk. Instead, he plans to talk with his health care professional and visit [quitnow.ca](http://quitnow.ca) for tips, tools and support.

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