

## MB2: Myth Buster Answers



<p><i>“Vape liquids and flavours are safe because you find them in food products”</i></p>	<p>Vape liquids contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Vegetable glycerine</i>: A colourless liquid extracted from vegetable or palm oil used in cosmetic products and pharmaceuticals. Their safety when vaporised or inhaled cannot be guaranteed.</li> <li>• <i>Propylene glycol</i>: Used in various edible products and although non-toxic when ingested, their safety when vaporised or inhaled cannot be guaranteed.</li> <li>• <i>Flavourings</i>: These are not safety tested for inhalation and some flavours have been shown to increase the toxicity of the vapour.</li> </ul>
<p><i>“I only smoke socially; I’m not a proper smoker!”</i></p>	<p>It takes seconds from inhaling cigarette smoke for nicotine to reach the brain. Just a few cigarettes or breathing in the smoke from other people’s cigarettes when they’re smoking near you is risky and will damage your lungs (and other things!). Nicotine is highly addictive and it only takes a few cigarettes to get hooked. It’s just as difficult to quit a ‘smoke with a drink’ habit as it is to quit daily smoking, this is called a habitual addiction.</p>
<p><i>“It’s okay, I’ll quit when I’m older”</i></p>	<p>Smoking early in life has long and short term health risks which begin almost immediately such as cardiovascular damage, reduced lung function, impaired lung growth and asthma.</p> <p>It’s not easy to quit!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 68% of smokers in Scotland would like to stop smoking</li> <li>• It can take multiple attempts to have a successful attempt at quitting</li> <li>• NHS Stop Smoking Services Scotland report (April 2021 to March 2022) reported 31,359 quit attempts, with 45% having successfully stopped at one month after the quit.</li> <li>• people are four times more likely to quit if they use NHS specialist support.</li> </ul>
<p><i>“Smoking relieves stress and anxiety”</i></p>	<p>This is a common misconception – in fact quitting smoking will actually improve a person’s anxiety, stress and depression.</p> <p>Smoking releases nicotine – which in turn changes brain chemistry and sets up a ‘reward pathway’ to release dopamine, but this feel good feeling quickly drops after a cigarette is finished and the withdrawal from nicotine is what can add to – or worsen – anxiety, stress or depression.</p> <p>So when someone says smoking calms them down, it’s rather the process of topping up on dopamine, relieving the withdrawal from nicotine and a combination of moving away from a stressful situation and taking deep breaths (needed for smoking) – but it comes at a high price!</p>
<p><i>“Smoking cannabis isn’t as bad as cigarettes”</i></p>	<p>In the UK, cannabis is usually smoked with tobacco. Smoking a joint is therefore still burning tobacco. The smoke still contains thousands of harmful chemicals.</p>
<p><i>“It’s not harming anyone else”</i></p>	<p>When you smoke indoors, your smoke lingers in the air for up to 5 hours.</p> <p>You can’t see or smell it, but it’s there. The particles are so small 85% of them are invisible and odourless. The particles are smaller than dust and drift easily as it moves through the house and open doors. Smoking near or leaning out of an open window doesn’t protect your family. Wherever a child is, they’ll breathe in the harmful chemicals. Candles, air fresheners and purifiers might</p>

	hide the smell of smoke, but they can't get rid of the harmful toxins.
<i>"There's no point in quitting now the damage is done"</i>	<p>It's never too late to quit smoking! We've all heard the stories of "my nan smoked 'til she was 90 and she was fine" but the fact is half of all long-term smokers will die because of it.</p> <p>The benefits of stopping can be felt really quickly!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• after 20 minutes: heart rate and blood pressure drop.</li> <li>• after 12 hours: the level of carbon monoxide in the blood returns to normal.</li> <li>• after 2 weeks to 3 months: lung function increases, and circulation improves.</li> <li>• after 1 to 9 months: coughs and shortness of breath decrease; lungs begin to recover, improving the ability to handle mucus and reduce the risk of infection.</li> <li>• after 1 year: excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a person who continues to smoke.</li> <li>• after 5 years: the risk of mouth, throat, oesophagus, and bladder cancer are halved. Risk of stroke is reduced to that of a non-smoker.</li> <li>• after 10 years: the risk of dying from lung cancer is about half that of continuing smokers. The risk of cancer of the larynx and pancreas decreases.</li> <li>• after 15 years: the risk of coronary heart disease is the same as that of non-smokers.</li> </ul>
<i>"My grandparents smoked and they both lived into their 90's"</i>	<p>They were among the minority!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Around 16% of all annual deaths in Scotland are related to tobacco, that's between 9,000 and 10,000 smoking related deaths every year.</li> <li>• In Scotland life-long smokers, aged 35-69, die 22 years younger and have fewer quality-life years.</li> <li>• 10-20% of all smokers will go on to develop COPD.</li> </ul>
<i>"Drinking alcohol is worse than smoking"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Around a 16% of all annual deaths in Scotland are related to tobacco, that's between 9,000 and 10,000 smoking related deaths every year.</li> <li>• Alcohol was a factor in 1,245 deaths in Scotland in 2021.</li> </ul> <p>Both drinking and smoking are harmful! While there is no guaranteed 'safe' level of drinking, regularly drinking more than the low-risk guidelines can be damaging in the short and long term. There is no 'safe' or 'low-risk' level of smoking.</p>
<i>"Smoking is bad for you, but vaping is okay"</i>	<p>E-cigarettes are useful <b>only</b> as a potential route towards stopping smoking. The longer-term health effects of vaping are still emerging, but it is already clear that these are <b>health-harming products</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There's an increased risk of a range of adverse health outcomes, including addiction, poisoning, seizures, burns and lung injury.</li> <li>• There are concerns related to the e-liquids and delivery methods which can contain or produce harmful ingredients and may have both short and long-term health impacts.</li> <li>• Recent studies suggest that e-cigarettes can negatively impact heart health, including heart rate and blood pressure.</li> <li>• They also impact lung health, particularly in those who already have asthma or other respiratory health issues.</li> <li>• Many e-cigarettes include toxic chemicals that have not been safety tested for inhalation.</li> <li>• Although some ingredients and flavours in e-liquids are found in edible products, these have not been safety tested for inhalation.</li> <li>• There is strong data indicating that e-cigarettes may create a new route into smoking for young people. Children who use e-cigarettes are up to <b>3x</b> more likely to take up smoking.</li> <li>• Nicotine can be highly addictive, so someone who vapes may have to deal</li> </ul>

	with cravings, feelings of stress and irritability that keep coming back.
<i>“Rollies aren’t as bad for you”</i>	Some people think smoking rollies is ‘natural’ or ‘organic’ but they contain the same tobacco, the same additives and the chemicals as ready-rolled cigarettes.
<i>“Cigarette filters protect me from the harmful stuff”</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ineffectiveness of cigarette filters and the tobacco industry’s misleading marketing of the benefits of filtered cigarettes are well documented.</li> <li>• Filter-tipped cigarettes may emit more harmful particles into the air as second-hand smoke than non-filter equivalents.</li> <li>• Defective filters, releasing plastic fibres and carbon particles, were knowingly sold by Philip Morris for 40 years without public disclosure.</li> </ul>