



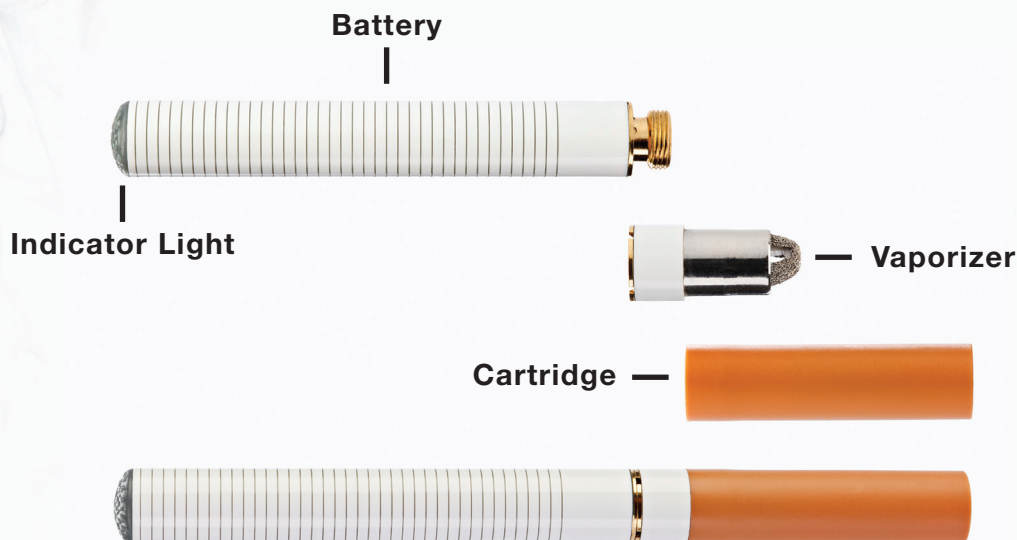
THE CANADIAN DENTAL  
HYGIENISTS ASSOCIATION  
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE  
DES HYGIÉNISTES DENTAIRE

# E-CIGARETTE FACT SHEET



## WHAT ARE E-CIGARETTES?

Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) are battery-powered devices that resemble conventional cigarettes. E-cigarettes usually have three main parts: a battery, a cartridge (containing water, flavouring and sometimes nicotine in a base of propylene glycol and glycerin), and an atomizer/vaporizer. Puffing on the device activates the atomizer to heat the cartridge solution, producing vapour that is inhaled by the user, an action that is often referred to as “vaping.” There is often an indicator light that mimics the end of a conventional cigarette.



## WHO USES E-CIGARETTES?

Since the introduction of e-cigarettes to North American markets in 2007, the use of e-cigarettes has increased substantially, especially among youth and young adults. Roughly 2.5 million Canadians have now tried using an e-cigarette. Reasons for e-cigarette use include curiosity, a perception that they are a less harmful alternative to tobacco, a desire to reduce and/or quit smoking, and convenience, as e-cigarettes are often permitted in locations where tobacco smoking is prohibited.







## ARE E-CIGARETTES SAFE?

Although e-cigarettes are perceived to be less harmful than conventional cigarettes, there are growing concerns about their possible adverse health effects, their potential to renormalize tobacco use, and increased uptake among youth. Ingredients that have been found in e-cigarettes and their vapour include:

- nicotine (a highly addictive substance)
- formaldehyde
- silicates
- carcinogenic compounds such as nitrosamines, carbonyl compounds, and volatile organic compounds (some levels similar to cigarettes)
- heavy metals

There has also been an increase in accidental poisonings and short-term eye and respiratory irritation with e-cigarette use. The potential harm associated with the long-term exposure to the second-hand vapour produced from e-cigarettes remains unknown.

E-cigarettes have not been approved as a smoking cessation aid by Health Canada. Those interested in quitting tobacco should speak to their health care providers, including dental hygienists, about safe and effective treatments and behavioural support.

