

Arguments for and against electronic cigarettes

Common arguments in favour of electronic cigarettes

- Electronic cigarettes are thought to be far less harmful for your health than smoking, as you don't get as many toxins as from regular tobacco.
- There are no circumstances where it would be better to continue to smoke than to use an electronic cigarette. They can be used to help reduce harm.
- Risks to health and safety from using electronic cigarettes are known to be much smaller than from smoking. There is a reduced risk of house fire deaths, although they must be used and charged safely and according to instructions.
- There is no evidence as yet to suggest that electronic cigarettes are a gateway to smoking.
- Electronic cigarettes are thought to be less harmful than normal cigarettes for the people around you.
- Electronic cigarettes can be used to quit smoking, especially for people who have failed using other methods.
- It is currently cheaper to use electronic cigarettes than regular cigarettes.
- You can control the level of nicotine used by buying different strengths.
- You are able to purchase electronic cigarettes that do not contain nicotine.

Common arguments against electronic cigarettes

- Electronic cigarettes have not been around long enough to know the long term impact on health.
- Using an electronic cigarette generally means that you will remain addicted to nicotine (unless you always use a zero nicotine e-cig).
- A number of the electronic cigarette companies are owned by tobacco companies.
- There is a risk that young people will use them and become addicted to nicotine or move on to tobacco smoking.
- There is a risk that they undermine public health messages about smoking to young people.
- If guidelines are not followed they represent a fire hazard when charging or using the batteries.
- If an electronic cigarette is modified or altered, it can be highly dangerous. Modifying electronic cigarettes is an increasingly popular pursuit.
- It can be difficult to identify, just by looking, if an electronic cigarette has been modified to burn cannabis or another illegal drug.
- If left within reach of a child or pet the nicotine in the tank can be dangerous if swallowed.