

# High School Conversation Guide



## QUICK FACTS:

- Young vape users are much more likely to smoke or use other products later in life.
- Nicotine can lead to learning difficulties and mental health struggles that can last a lifetime.
- The tobacco industry spends billions of dollars manipulating teens to make a profit.

## PARENT POINTER:

Avoid terms like “peer pressure” and “influence.” Older teens may get defensive if they feel like you’re accusing them or their friend group. Instead, let your teen know you are focused and concerned about their well-being and future goals.

## Conversation Starters

1. “Have you seen how vape and tobacco marketing tries to make nicotine seem harmless?”
  - Open up the conversation by letting your teen know tobacco is the enemy. Talk about the manipulative tactics they use to hook teens early and build a united front against their deceptive schemes.
2. “What do you know about the physical and mental effects of nicotine addiction?”
  - This question allows you to gauge their knowledge on the topic rather than lecturing or belittling them. Once they’ve answered, fill in the gaps.

### 3. “Do you think vapes and nicotine pouches are safer than cigarettes?”

- A lot of people use vapes to quit smoking. However, more and more teens are picking up vapes as their first choice due to flavors and advertising. Listen to your teen’s thoughts about it and explain that this is clever and misleading advertising from tobacco companies.



### 4. “Have you ever been tempted to smoke or vape?”

- Do not ask them if they *have* — ask if they’ve been *tempted*. This ensures they won’t feel accused or interrogated about the topic and gives them the opportunity to talk about their experiences.

### 5. “Do you understand how serious addiction is?”

- Your teen is probably spending a lot of time thinking about their future. Encourage them to keep addiction out of it for a happier, healthier life.

## Be Prepared ...

### 1. To learn your teen is using a tobacco or nicotine product.

- DO NOT get angry or lash out. Thank them for their honesty and let them know you’re ready to support their quit journey. Bring up their aspirations for the future and calmly explain how they can be impacted by tobacco and nicotine. Point them toward the [TSET Healthy Youth Initiative](#) for quitting resources.

### 2. For your teen to push back or get defensive.

- If your teen feels attacked or accused, they won’t be as receptive to your discussion, especially if they have never tried or been tempted by tobacco products. Have facts ready and remind them you are one team against the tobacco industry.

### 3. To talk about yourself.

- Whether you struggled with addiction in your past or are currently using tobacco products yourself, you are still the parent or guardian responsible for protecting your teen. You should not be ashamed. Instead, use your experiences as evidence to back up your points.

### 4. To have more than one discussion.

- The tobacco industry is always changing and always looking for new ways to hook kids. Make sure your teen sees you as a trusted source by talking often and keeping the conversation moving. As they age, they'll appreciate your vigilance. Ultimately, you are protecting them from a long life of struggles.

### 5. For claims that vaping is “no big deal” or “not as bad as other drugs.”

- The flavors and designs of modern products make them seem harmless, but they are just as addictive as cigarettes and even hard drugs. Don't be afraid of the comparison; instead, use it as an opportunity to talk about the health risks and complications associated with nicotine. These include trouble breathing, increased asthma attacks, mental health struggles and increased heart rate.



## SOURCES

[U.S. Food & Drug Administration](#)   [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention](#)  
[Tobacco Stops With Me](#)