

# Pregnant women shouldn't vape

September 26 2016, by Mallory Powell

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E-cigarettes are increasingly popular, and adult women of childbearing age are the most common users. This is especially true in Kentucky, which has the country's second highest rate of smoking during pregnancy. Many women try to quit or reduce their smoking while pregnant, and may turn to e-cigs under the belief that they are safer or harmless during pregnancy. But are e-cigs and other electronic smoking products safe for an unborn child?

The short answer is no. E-cigs and similar products are fairly new, so we are still learning about their full health effects on the body and brain of developing babies, but we do know that e-cigarettes are not safe during pregnancy.

- Nicotine harms a fetus. E-cigarettes and other electronic smoking products, like vapes, contain nicotine, which we know can cause birth defects and long-term health consequences for the developing brain and body of an [unborn child](#).
- E-cigs don't help you quit smoking. Recent research shows that most [pregnant women](#) who have used e-cigs end up using both e-cigs and traditional cigarettes (dual use), or relapse back to traditional cigarettes entirely. It is possible that e-cig use could actually increase harm to a fetus as a result of dual use or full relapse.
- E-cigs contain other harmful chemicals. There is formaldehyde and cancer-causing agents in the cartridges and aerosol (commonly referred to as vapor) of e-cigarettes. A fetus is exposed to these agents if the mother uses e-cigs. E-cigs and

similar products were not previously regulated, so it is not always clear what other [harmful chemicals](#) they might contain.

- Secondhand exposure e-cigs is also dangerous during pregnancy. Pregnant women should not be around e-cig aerosol (vapor), just like they should not be around secondhand smoke from traditional cigarettes.

If you are pregnant or might become pregnant and would like to quit smoking or using e-cigs, talk to your nurse midwife, doctor or pregnancy care provider. You can also call the health department's Quit Line, specifically for women who are pregnant or recently had a baby, at 1-800-784-8669.

At the University of Kentucky, we are conducting a health research study to learn more about the effects of e-cig use during pregnancy. If you are in your first trimester of [pregnancy](#) and have used cigarettes or e-cigs in the last three months, we invite you to participate. All information is kept confidential. To learn more, call our research team at 859.333.1572, or visit [ukclinicalresearch.com](http://ukclinicalresearch.com) .

Provided by University of Kentucky

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