

Jamaica Gleaner Online

One of the latest gadgets making the rounds in our island is the electronic cigarette. Also called e-cigarette, this device is a recent addition to [tobacco](#)-related substances. What are the effects of this device? Can it be used to break the addiction to regular cigarette? Information from the Jamaica Coalition for Tobacco Control and the Healthy Caribbean Coalition is presented here.

The electronic cigarette was developed in China in 2004. It is usually made of a stainless steel chamber containing various concentrations of nicotine. Powered by a rechargeable battery, it is puffed like a regular cigarette but it does not need to be lit, and no fumes are emitted. Instead, it produces a fine mist which is absorbed by the lungs.

E-cigarettes as gateway [drug](#)

People who market the e-cigarette, claim that it can be used to break the habit of smoking 'real' cigarettes. Unfortunately, there is no scientific evidence to support this claim. These substances contain nicotine of varying levels of potency. There is no evidence that using the e-cigarette will help to break the addiction to tobacco. Instead, this might be a gateway to nicotine addiction.

Further, there is reason to believe that this device is not safe for human consumption. Of great concern is the lack of regulation of the concentrations of nicotine in the e-cigarette. Even more alarming is the announcement in 2008 by the US Food and Drug Administration that laboratory analysis had detected carcinogens and diethylene glycol (a toxic substance) in the e-[cigarette](#).

A recent survey of users of e-cigarettes, published in BMC Public Health (JF Etter, 2010), suggests that smokers are frequently lured into trying e-cigarettes in an effort to [stop smoking](#) or at least to reduce the consumption of cigarettes. They also used e-cigarettes so as not to disturb people in close proximity to them while they smoke.

The smokers interviewed reported that they breathe easier and did less coughing. They also preferred the flavours offered in the e-cigarettes. However, they reported that the devices frequently malfunctioned and they worried about the lack of regulation of these devices. The presence of toxic substances in e-cigarettes caused great concern.

The e-cigarette will no doubt be readily available. It is important to introduce regulation of this product, especially since little information is available on its effects. However, at the very least, the presence of [nicotine](#) in this device represents a potential source of addiction to users. Beware!

Dr Pauline Williams-Green is a family physician and president of the Caribbean College of Family Physicians; email: yourhealth@gleanerjm.com.

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[Elaine](#) ★ [5 hours ago](#)

•

Smokers are more often "lured" into trying ineffective medications such as nicotine patches, gum, lozenges, and inhalers or dangerous medications such as Chantix in their quest to stop smoking. Medicinal nicotine products, when used as directed have a dismal track record for sustained smoking abstinence (7% at 6 months, 5% at 1 year, and 2% at 2 months). Chantix has caused many deaths.

Dr. Williams-Green forgot to mention that the Etter survey indicated that 63% of the e-cigarette users achieved smoking abstinence. The purpose of the products is to replace smoking, not to treat nicotine addiction. The resulting improvements in the health of users speaks for itself. Why would Dr. Williams-Green prefer that her patients continue inhaling smoke or quitting temporarily using medicinal nicotine, only to relapse within a short time?

In the 6 years the products have been in use world-wide, not one death has occurred. There have been zero reports of serious adverse events.

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jiverock ★ [8 hours ago](#)

• if you're already a smoker, this product will help you to stop using tobacco. you'll still get the nicotine but in a safer manner. there's no real worries, the studies that were done didn't find any more harmful substances in these than nicorette gum or any other quit smoking aid. the percentage of diethylene glycol was absolutely minimal and only found in one of the devices. there are a number of better devices today and manufacturers outside of china.

i've been using this device for 4 months and haven't had the desire to smoke a regular tobacco cigarette. i feel great. can' breathe, taste, smell, and none of the harm of second hand smoke or anything like that.

the only thing you should really be concerned about is wasting money on a device that doesn't work. there are a number of kiosks at malls and such that will make you pay outrageous prices for terrible products. get a 510 to start, you'll like it. the vapor is just like a cigarette, and you'll get your nicotine fix.

it's safer. stop trying to scare people.

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Vaper ★ [8 hours ago](#)

• It is a device used as an alternative to smoking. Key word being alternative. It is not meant for non-smokers and if not used as such, how can this be a gateway device? Beware, of what? There are over 4000 chemicals found in a regular cigarette while an e-cigarette contains less than 10. That is a significant difference while still maintaining the same sensation of smoking. Users who have been smoking cigarettes for decades are able to stop smoking in a matter of days by switching to e-cigarettes/vaping. Levels of nicotine found in e-cigarette liquid can be dropped to 0 to wean a user completely off nicotine. FDA has done a haphazard, very poor job with their studies. They were not done thoroughly and only took a sample of liquid... yet they use that small sample to condemn an entire sub-culture. They should "Beware!".

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blynd ★ [9 hours ago](#)

• "There is no evidence that using the e-cigarette will help to break the addiction to tobacco. Instead, this might be a gateway to nicotine addiction."

So wait a minute, are you saying smokers are actually addicted to tobacco and not the nicotine in tobacco?

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GS ★ [10 hours ago](#)



• Obviously has no clue what shes talking about. Needs to do a bit more research!

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