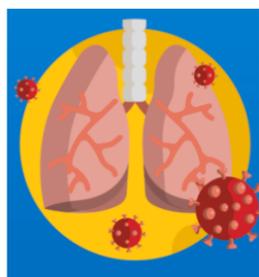# VAPING & COVID-19

Health officials have recently warned of dangerous links between vaping and infectious diseases such as COVID-19.

UNDERSTANDING COVID-19

- COVID-19 is caused by an infectious virus (SARS-CoV-2).
- COVID-19 is spread through contact with droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose or mouth of an infected person.
- It is possible to spread COVID-19 for days before experiencing any symptoms, or without ever experiencing any symptoms.

CONNECTION BETWEEN VAPING & COVID-19

- A recent study from Stanford University School of Medicine found that **teens and young adults who vape are 5 times more likely to become infected with COVID than those who do not**.
- Vaping does NOT cause COVID-19, but can worsen it:
  - Vaping can speed up the spread of the disease, meaning more people get infected more quickly.
  - Vaping can increase the likelihood of serious complications, meaning those who vape are more likely to get sick if they catch the disease.

HOW VAPING CAN SPEED THE SPREAD & WORSEN THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19

1) SOCIAL BEHAVIORS OF VAPING

- **Sharing devices**
  - When a person puts an e-cigarette/vape device in their mouth they get saliva and germs on the device.
  - If an infected person then shares that device with others it can pass germs on to everyone else who uses it, even if the infected person last used the device <u>days</u> ago.
- **Touching your face**
  - Vaping violates one of the main rules during the pandemic-don't touch your face. Every time someone brings a device to their mouth they could be transferring germs from their hands to their face or vice versa.
- **Gathering in crowds likely without sufficient social distancing**
  - Being in a crowd likely violates public health guidance regarding recommended group sizes and social distancing.
  - E-cigarettes produce an aerosol, which may contain virus microdroplets that get carried further than 6 feet.

2) VAPING & LUNG HEALTH

- COVID-19 is a respiratory illness, meaning it affects the lungs.
  - Overall lung health at the time of COVID infection is a <u>**very**</u> important factor that may determine how well the body will be able to fight off the illness.

- Vaping involves inhaling aerosolized particles and chemicals into the lungs, which harms the cells of the lungs and reduces the ability of the immune system to respond to an infection.
  - By suppressing the body's protective mechanisms, vaping may make it more likely that someone will catch a respiratory virus and that they will have more serious health consequences from the disease.
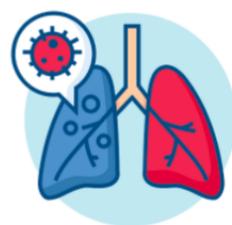
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All of us are safer when each of us is healthier.

Vaping poses serious health risks to our entire community and has the ability to both speed the spread and worsen the effects of COVID-19. Refraining from (or quitting) vaping not only reduces one's risk for COVID-19 and other lung diseases, but it helps keep others safe too. To learn more about vaping and access cessation resources check out the CCSD Vaping Education, Prevention, & Cessation Resource Toolkit using this <u>link</u> or by scanning the QR code below.