

JUULING: The New Wave of E-Cigarettes

Keeping up with current substance use trends is very much a cat and mouse game between adults and youth. Just when we think we've heard about it all, a new device comes out on the market. The JUUL has been getting more attention in the news as a new vaping device. JUUL devices are flat and rectangular and resemble a USB flash drive. They are thinner than an iPhone and weigh even less. Users snap on a cartridge filled with liquid nicotine (nicotine extracted from tobacco) and inhale from the device. The nicotine in one cartridge (also referenced as pods) is approximately equivalent to a whole pack of cigarettes, or 200 puffs. Some e-cigarette critics are calling the JUUL the "iPhone of vaping". One puff of the powerful liquid nicotine can produce a quick head rush that is appealing to some teens. Likewise, the sleek and portable design makes it easy to disguise the device in school or at home if parents or educators are unaware of the product. Because JUUL pods come in flavors, the odor can be mistaken for something else such as a light perfume or a scented lotion. A JUUL starter kit can be purchased online via the JUUL website for \$49.99 and includes a re-chargeable Juul device, a USB charger, a warranty, and a four pack of the flavored JUUL pods. JUUL devices can also be purchased locally at retailers such as smoke and vape stores and KWIK Shops. As with other vaping devices, there is the potential of youth utilizing the JUUL device for marijuana concentrates (liquid THC). There are several online videos that highlight how to refill the JUUL pods with a substance of your choosing. In this day and age, it should not come as a surprise that how to make liquid THC (a concentrated form of marijuana) can also be found on the information superhighway of the internet. As with all concentrates, the potency of the marijuana is extremely higher than that of marijuana that is found in a joint or the bud that is smoked from a pipe. Most concentrates have anywhere from 60-80% THC, delivering extremely damaging effects to the developing adolescent brain.

Whether experimenting with these devices for the rush of nicotine or the high of marijuana concentrates, parents and professionals who work with youth should be aware that this is an increasingly popular trend amongst teens. Engaging in conversations with our youth about JUULING and the risks associated with both nicotine and marijuana use should be part of our youth substance use prevention efforts. Below is a link to a document produced by the CDC on talking with youth about the use of e-cigarettes. It contains helpful information that can serve as a guide in conversations between parents and youth.



https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/SGR_ECig_ParentTipSheet_508.pdf

References: National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), www.juulvapor.com, USA Today (October 2017), The New York Times (February 2018), The Boston Globe (November 2017).