

How Can I Tell if My Child is JUULing or Vaping?

If you're concerned that your child may be JUULing, here are a few signs you should be on the lookout for:

Unexplained Sweet Scent

With the JUUL product available in 16 different flavors, many of which are sweet and/or fruity, be on the lookout for an unexplainable, sweet scent which may indicate your child is JUULing. (Keep in mind that JUULs create far less of a vapor or "cloud" than traditional e-cigarettes, so it may be more difficult to detect the scent.)

USB Flash Drive that Doesn't Look Normal

If you come across an unusual looking USB flash drive, often with holes on one end (the mouthpiece), chances are it's a JUUL and not an ordinary flash drive.

Skippping the Caffeine

Some e-cigarette users suddenly find themselves developing sensitivity to caffeine. So, if your teen used to be hitting Starbucks regularly or chugging Red Bulls and is now suddenly passing on their favorite caffeinated drinks, this could be a red flag.

Increased Thirst

Dehydration, often described by vapors as dry or cotton mouth is actually a fairly common side effect of JUULing and vaping in general. Propylene Glycol, one of the ingredients in e-liquid, is the primary cause of the dehydration. The substance has been shown to absorb and hold in water molecules, preventing them from being absorbed into the body. Therefore, if you notice your teen drinking more than they typically do or you happen to notice other signs of dehydration such as dark circles under their eyes, you may want to dive a little deeper to determine the cause.

Nosebleeds

Typically, when a person is JUULing they exhale the vapor through their nose which can cause the inside of their nostrils to become dried triggering random nosebleeds. The chemical in the e-liquid, Propylene Glycol, is a dehydrating chemical that strips the moisture from the inside of the nose. So, if your child is suddenly experiencing nosebleeds, it probably deserves more attention to determine the cause.

Bloody Sores in the Mouth / Smoker's Cough

According to a 2017 article in Science News for Students, entitled "Concerns Explode Over New Health Risks of Vaping," researchers are now linking e-cigarettes with mouth wounds that won't heal and smoker's cough. The vapors disrupt the immune system which can have harsh effects on human cells. Keep your eye on your child if they complain of sores in their mouth or begin to show signs of an unexplained cough.

Finding Organic Cotton Balls and Metallic Wires

If you stumble across any unbleached, organic cotton balls or thin metallic coils, which are components used when vaping, it's typically a dead giveaway that your child is vaping.

Discarded Atomizers

The atomizer is an important part of any e-cig. It's the component of the e-cig that turns the e-liquid into vapor. The atomizers don't last forever and eventually need to be discarded.

Discarded JUUL Pods

To use a JUUL, users purchase JUUL "pods." As the name suggests, the pod systems are e-cigarettes that make use of a pod as opposed to a traditional atomizer, although they pretty much serve the same function. If you happen to see discarded JUUL pods in your child's backpack, bedroom, pockets or elsewhere, there's reason for concern.

When approaching the subject of JUULing with your child, it's important to remember that teenagers view JUULing as cool, fairly harmless and fun, and the pressure to try it among their peers is oftentimes intense.

Experts say it's important that we talk with our kids calmly and honestly about tobacco, e-cigarettes, and nicotine addiction. There's actually a fairly good chance your child has no idea that JUULs contain nicotine or the damaging impact they can have on their health. Help them understand just how harmful JUULing is, how addictive nicotine is and how nicotine addiction can affect their health, both short and long-term, as well as their performance in school and in sports.

Above all, keep the lines of communication open with your child. The more comfortable they are coming to you to discuss important issues, the more open they'll be to further discussion and the more accepting they'll be of your guidance.