Frequently Asked Questions About E-Cigarettes

Q. *What are electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes)?*

A. E-cigarettes are battery operated products designed to turn nicotine and other chemicals into vapor. A person then inhales the vapor. E-cigarettes are often made to look like cigarettes, cigars, pipes or pens.

Q. *What are the health effects of e-cigarettes?*

A. E-cigarettes contain nicotine, a highly addictive neurotoxin. E-cigarettes do not emit water vapor, but a mix of chemicals toxic to human cells in the form of an aerosol. The chemicals in the aerosol travel through the circulatory system to the brain and all organs. Mainstream and secondhand e-cigarette aerosol has been found to contain at least 10 chemicals that are on California's Proposition 65 list of chemicals known to cause cancer, birth defects or other reproductive harm.

Q. *Aren't e-cigarette aerosol emissions less harmful than tobacco smoke from traditional cigarettes? Do they help you quit smoking cigarettes?*

A. The heated e-liquid that forms an aerosol (not just water vapor) in e-cigarettes has been found to contain toxic chemicals like formaldehyde, lead, nickel and acetaldehyde, all of which have been found to cause cancer and other diseases. There's also no scientific evidence that e-cigarettes help smokers successfully quit traditional cigarettes. E-cigarette users are no more likely to quit than regular smokers, with one study finding 89 percent of e-cigarette users still using them one year later.

Q. *Do e-cigarettes fall under the UCLA-SAFE project's efforts to eliminate secondhand smoke in apartments?*

A. The UCLA-SAFE project's primary focus is on tobacco smoke. However, we realize that e-cigarettes do present a challenge because they pose a health hazard. For more information, please email Project Manager Marlene Gomez at margomez@ucla.edu.

Sources: California Department of Public Health and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention