

Section 7.

How the tobacco and vaping industries target young people

Vapes have become very popular worldwide, all thanks to some stealthy marketing tricks. Vaping companies have taken a page out of the tobacco industry's book, using flashy packaging, social media influencers and sponsorships to get a whole new generation hooked on what they're selling.

They use things like making you feel connected emotionally with advertisements showing colourful images of friendship, fitting in, having fun, or feeling powerful. Plus, they get famous people to promote their products online.

How vaping appeals to youth

When vapes first entered the market, one of the marketing appeals was to create large clouds. This trend led young people to compete for larger clouds without considering the substances they were inhaling. Today, these products have evolved to be sleeker, smaller, and less noticeable. Some products include youth-friendly features like fidget spinners and designs that make them easy to hide. Most of these products also include flavours that clearly appeal to a younger generation. Flavours like birthday cake, strawberry watermelon, gummy bear, and raspberry fizz are aimed at young people.

- **Do you know of any flavours of e-liquids?**
- **How do the names chosen for these flavours make you feel?**

Vaping advertising is hard to monitor online

In Ontario, regulations like the Smoke-free Ontario Act, 2017 have slowed down tactics like flashy ads, discounts, and bold displays for smoking and vaping. But a big chunk of the marketing is happening where it's not as easy to see: online.

Some influencers are posting almost every day, showing off "smoke tricks" with vapour clouds, talking about new e-liquid flavours and promoting or giving away products. This is happening even though federal rules say it's illegal for companies to use people in any vaping promotions.

Some young people see vaping not just as a trendy lifestyle choice, but believe it's a safer option to smoking. Certain Canadian companies have posted on Instagram suggesting that vaping has health benefits and that play down potential risks. For instance, an e-liquid manufacturer in Canada shared a post that says, according to the federal government, vaping is less harmful than smoking. This is despite the fact that the federal government has created laws that prohibiting making any health claims about vaping.

It's important to look closely at the ads you may see online. Ask yourself what the advertiser is *really* selling.