



DON'T LET YOUR TEETH GO UP IN SMOKE!

SUBMITTED BY DR. KATE GILSON

RECENTLY, I'VE SPENT QUITE A BIT OF TIME on a large college campus. I was shocked to see how many of the students were vaping! In a population that's comprised of some of the smartest kids in the state, this habit is very prevalent. This was very eye-opening to me.

It's no secret that vaping isn't the "healthy alternative" to smoking as it was once sold to be. There are several reasons it's bad for you. First and foremost, there's a good chance that it could cause immediate damage to your lungs. Every day, we hear more cases of life-threatening lung disease caused by vaping. That alone should be enough to stop anyone from trying it! However, if that's not reason enough, did you know that vaping is also bad for your teeth?

Vape liquid contains several chemicals including propylene glycol, benzene and formaldehyde. Propylene glycol is the carrier product used in vaping liquid and one of its major ingredients. This colorless, viscous liquid has a sweet taste. When this substance comes into contact with the oral environment, it breaks down into several different acids, all of which are toxic to enamel and soft tissues. Propylene glycol also bonds to the water molecules in saliva and

soft tissues causing xerostomia or "dry mouth." This leads to an increase in cavities, gum disease and other oral-health issues.

A second major ingredient in vape liquid is glycerin, which is also colorless, odorless, viscous and sweet-tasting. Alone, glycerin will not cause cavities. However, when it's combined with the flavorings used in e-cigarette liquids, it forms a film on teeth that allows more cavity-causing bacteria to stick to teeth surfaces. This can quickly cause extensive tooth decay. Sometimes nicotine is also added to these chemical ingredients, which restricts blood flow to gum tissues. This increases your chances of developing gum disease and eventually losing your teeth.

Even the vape products that claim to be nicotine-free have been shown to contain a small amount of nicotine. Regarding vape pens, a lithium-ion battery is used to heat the vape liquid. This can pose a risk of fire or explosion as you inhale – risking severe facial burns.

So, if life-threatening lung disease and the possibility of having a lithium battery explode in your face aren't enough to stop you from vaping, you might want to consider your oral health.

Maybe try a better alternative ... like chewing sugar-free gum.

Dr. Kate Gilson

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