
E-liquids for use in e-cigarettes

Summary

- The liquid used in e-cigarettes is known as e-liquid.
 - E-liquid products may or may not contain nicotine or other harmful substances.
 - E-liquid products are not always labelled accurately and there is no guarantee that a product does not contain nicotine.
 - Nicotine is a poison. If swallowed it can cause serious illness and, in some cases, death.
 - Children and pets are at high risk of harm due to poisoning caused by swallowing e-liquid.
 - Electronic cigarette components and e-liquid capsules are also a choking hazard for young children.
 - To be safe, it is preferable not to use e-cigarettes or e-liquids in front of children, and for these products to be locked away out of sight when not in use.
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What are e-liquids?

Electronic cigarettes – or **e-cigarettes** – simulate the act of smoking, but they don't burn tobacco. Instead, the e-cigarette is a battery-powered device that works by heating liquid into a vapour, which is then inhaled into the lungs. Using an e-cigarette is sometimes called 'vaping'.

Liquid for use inside an e-cigarette is called e-liquid but is also known as e-juice or vape juice.

E-liquids may contain nicotine, as well as propylene glycol, vegetable glycerine or glycerol, other chemicals (including those used to create flavours) and, in some cases, water.

E-liquid products may not be labelled properly or accurately, or packaged safely.

There is no guarantee that an e-liquid labelled 'non-nicotine' does not contain nicotine. It may also not be possible to know what other chemicals are contained in the e-liquid.

What are the dangers of e-liquids?

The full health impacts of inhaling vapor from e-liquids used in e-cigarettes are not yet known.

Potential dangers of e-cigarettes include:

- **ingestion (swallowing) of e-liquid** – which can lead to poisoning and even death when swallowed by children
- **harm from inhaling e-liquid chemicals as vapour** – the health effects of inhaling the various chemicals used in e-cigarette liquids may not be known. For example, flavouring may be safe for use in food, but not when they are inhaled
- **inhalation of particulate matter produced by e-cigarettes** – Particulate matter emitted by e-cigarettes could be dangerous to those who inhale it, just as passive smoking is harmful to those who share a contained space with regular smokers. Inhaling particulate matter can lead to asthma attacks and heart disease
- **inaccurate labelling** – e-liquids may not be labelled properly or packaged safely. E-liquids labelled as 'nicotine-free' may contain nicotine
- **unsafe packaging** – e-liquids may not be packaged safely. E-liquids stored in plastic or glass bottles or containers can be easily opened by children. E-liquids may also spill or leak from their bottle or container.

E-liquid safety around children

If you use an e-cigarette:

- keep it where children cannot see it or reach it

- when you are not using it, lock it away
- do not use or discard your e-cigarette in front of children.

What to do if e-liquid is swallowed

If you are worried a child has swallowed liquid from an e-cigarette, ring the **Victorian Poisons Information Centre** on **13 11 26** immediately.

If they are very unwell, have collapsed, stopped breathing, are fitting or having an anaphylactic reaction, **ring triple zero (000) for an ambulance.**

E-liquids and the law

Adults in Victoria can legally buy and use e-liquids that do not contain nicotine.

In Victoria – as in the other state and territories of Australia – it is generally illegal to sell, possess or use e-liquids containing nicotine.

The exception is where liquid nicotine has been prescribed by a medical practitioner who has established a therapeutic need for a particular patient. In these cases, the liquid nicotine can then be supplied by a compounding pharmacy, or a limited supply can be imported through the **Therapeutic Goods Administration personal importation scheme**.

Under the *Victorian Tobacco Act 1987*, it is illegal to sell or supply an e-cigarette or an e-liquid for use in an e-cigarette to a person under 18 years of age.

Where to get help

- In an emergency, call triple zero (000) for an ambulance
- **Victorian Poisons Information Centre** on Tel. **13 11 26**
- **Quitline** Tel. **13 7848**, Monday to Friday, 8 am–8 pm
- **Quit**

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