



MEDIA RELEASE

21 Sept 2017

E-cigs definitely less harmful than smoking

Key stakeholders in tobacco and health in Scotland have agreed for the first time that using e-cigarettes is definitely less harmful than smoking tobacco. Based on the current evidence, the consensus is also clear that using e-cigarettes while still smoking (dual use) does not provide health benefits.

NHS Health Scotland led the consensus with over 20 partners in the NHS, Scottish Government, third sector and academia. Its aim is to clarify any confusion around the harms and benefits of using e-cigarettes.

Dr Andrew Fraser, Director of Public Health Science at NHS Health Scotland said:

“Recent research has shown an emerging perception among the general public that e-cigarettes are just as harmful to health as tobacco is. This is not the case – we know from current evidence that vaping carries less risk than smoking tobacco. So it would be a good thing if smokers used e-cigarettes instead of smoking tobacco.

“To be absolutely clear, e-cigarettes are useful for public health and health service purposes only as a potential route towards stopping smoking completely. Access to e-cigarettes needs to be controlled carefully; they are not products for children or non-smokers.”

Linda Bauld, Professor of Health Policy (University of Stirling) and CRUK BUPA Chair in Behavioural Research for Cancer Prevention:

“It is good to see NHS Health Scotland and partners making it clear that e-cigarettes are less harmful than tobacco.

“We also need to get the point across to people that, based on what we know to date, that dual use (using e-cigarettes without stopping smoking) is still bad for your health. So we would strongly encourage

anyone who is using both to stop smoking tobacco as soon as they can.”

Sheila Duffy, Chief Executive of ASH Scotland said:

“This statement brings some clarity to an issue which has caused confusion. There is now agreement that vaping e-cigarettes carries less risk than smoking tobacco.

“Although we still don't know the long-term health effects of vaping, we can be confident that any smoker switching entirely to e-cigarettes will be taking in far fewer cancer-causing chemicals. Tobacco is lethal and I'd encourage anyone who smokes to find a way of quitting that works for them, which could include using e-cigarettes, and to make use of the free NHS stop-smoking support available to help.”

-ENDS-

Contact

For further information please contact NHS Health Scotland's Communications and Engagement Team on 07500 854574 or email nhs.HealthScotland-Communications@nhs.net

Notes to Editors

1. Consensus statement on e-cigarettes:
<http://www.healthscotland.scot/health-topics/smoking/e-cigarettes>
2. The consensus statement was led by NHS Health Scotland in collaboration with the following organisations: ASH Scotland, Cancer Research UK, Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland, Chief Medical Officer for Scotland, Directors of Public Health, Faculty of Public Health, NHS Ayrshire & Arran, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, NHS Tayside, Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation, RCGP, RCPSE, RCPSG, Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland, Scottish Collaboration for Public Health Research Policy, Scottish Consultants in Dental Health, Scottish Thoracic Society, UK Centre for Tobacco & Alcohol Studies, University of Edinburgh and University of Stirling.

Follow us on Twitter

@NHS_HS