



The environmental impact from e-cigarettes

E-cigarettes/vapes are harmful to your health and our environment. Many vapes are disposed of in landfill or simply discarded in the environment where they pollute our waterways and land with plastics, chemicals and electronic waste. E-cigarettes contain many different parts, and only some components can be recycled, whilst others are single use and generate large amounts of waste, so the best thing you can do for the environment is to not vape.

i E-cigarettes are bad for the planet.
Reduce your waste by choosing not to vape.

What are the environmental impacts?

Some of the impacts include:



Deforestation and destruction of habitats from mining for materials.



Carbon emissions from manufacturing and transportation.



Waste from packaging ends up in landfill causing environmental harm by contaminating the land.



Use and disposal of e-cigarettes:

- A range of plastic, chemical, and electronic waste
- Fires in bins and landfill from batteries
- Air pollution from the vapour emitted
- Chemicals that can leach into water and soil.



Watch our video on the impact of e-cigarettes on the environment, scan here.

What type of waste comes from e-cigarettes?

Plastic waste – the vaping device

E-cigarette devices and single use pods are made of plastic which accumulate in our land and waterways.

- Plastic takes hundreds of years to decompose and can be consumed by animals, resulting in injuries and death.
- E-cigarettes can leach microplastics into waterways and be consumed by aquatic life. Microplastics have even been found in the food we eat.
- Many parts of the device cannot be recycled, including the plastic pods as they may be contaminated with chemicals.



Only 13% of plastic gets recycled, so even if you dispose of your vape correctly, it is likely to end up in landfill or the environment.

Chemical waste – nicotine and toxic chemicals in the e-liquid

Almost all e-liquids sold in Australia contain nicotine (even if they say they don't) and these chemicals are classified as hazardous waste.

- Hazardous waste is waste that is harmful to humans and the environment and must be disposed of carefully.
- E-liquids contain a mixture of toxic chemicals that can contaminate our drinking water and leach into our environment.
- These chemicals are poisonous to fish and other aquatic life.



E-cigarettes release small particles into the air creating indoor air pollution – which is harmful to breathe in.

Electronic waste – batteries

E-cigarettes are powered by a lithium-ion battery to heat the e-liquid into a vapour.

- Used batteries are both hazardous and electronic waste.
- When damaged or placed under extreme heat, batteries can explode and cause fires.
- In the United States, 150 million e-cigarettes are thrown away each year. This is the same as 6,000 electric vehicles being driven once and thrown away.



Lithium is a precious natural resource that could instead be used to power green technology such as electric vehicles.

References:

1. Positive Choices 2023, The environment impacts of e-cigarettes/vaping explained, <https://positivechoices.org.au/blog/the-environmental-impacts-of-ecigarettesvaping>. 2. Truth Initiative 2023, Tobacco and the environment, https://truthinitiative.org/sites/default/files/media/files/2023/04/Truth_Environment%20FactSheet%20Update%202023_v3_FINAL.pdf. 3. Clean up Australia 2023, E-cigarettes are an environmental triple threat, <https://www.cleanup.org.au/e-cigarettes>. 4. National Geographic 2023, You eat thousands of bits of plastic every year, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/you-eat-thousands-of-bits-of-plastic-every-year>. 5. Better Health Victoria 2014, Hazardous waste, <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/hazardous-waste>. 6. VicHealth 2023, Vaping the impact on our environment, <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/our-health/everything-we-know-so-far-about-vaping/impact-vapingour-environment#:~:text=The%20impact%20on%20our%20environment&text=Many%20e%20cigarette%20pods%20are,that%20takes%20centuries%20to%20degrade.&text=E%2Dliquids%>.

WOULD YOU LIKE MORE INFORMATION?

E-cigarettes are harmful to our environment and despite our best intentions e-cigarettes are difficult to dispose of in a safe manner. All waste damages our environment and the only way to ensure we are playing our role in protecting the environment is to reduce our waste altogether by choosing not to vape.

Contact Quitline - 13 QUIT (13 7848) for advice, tips and strategies to quit vaping or visit quit.org.au

For more information and resources on e-cigarettes and how they can impact your health visit Lung Foundation Australia's website via lungfoundation.com.au/vaping.

Lungfoundation.com.au | Freecall 1800 654 301 | enquiries@lungfoundation.com.au