The New Look of Nicotine Addiction:
Talk with your kids about the dangers of vaping

While cigarette smoking among youth has declined, the use of other tobacco products, including E-Cigarettes has increased. In their efforts to eventually hook kids on tobacco, the tobacco and vaping industries target young people by using three primary tactics – making products sweet, cheap and easy to get.

Talk with Your Kids. Talking with your kids about vaping is one of the most important things you can do. Below are tips to help you prepare for and start the conversation.

- **Be patient and ready to listen.** Your goal is to have a conversation, not to deliver a lecture. So, avoid criticism and encourage an open dialogue.
- **There is no “perfect time” to talk.** Driving in the car together or waiting at an appointment is often the best time. You can start by mentioning a news story, a TV show, or something that you heard about vaping. Or, ask your child what he or she thinks about a situation you witness together such as seeing someone use an E-Cigarette, passing a vape shop when you are out, or seeing an E-Cigarette advertisement.
- **There is no “perfect talk.”** Consider your talks with your child about vaping as a learning opportunity for both of you, and perhaps just the beginning of an ongoing dialogue. You may have some facts about vaping at hand, but concede that you don’t know all the answers. It will go a long way to keep your kids from going on the defensive.
- **Ask what your child thinks.** Show some genuine curiosity. Ask your child, “What’s your take on vaping?” or “Do you know kids who use E-Cigarettes?”
- **Be open and honest.** Be truthful about what you know about the dangers of vaping, and what you don’t. You can honestly say, though, “Vaping isn’t harmless. I hope you can steer clear of it.”

You can’t always control everything your children do when they’re not with you. Talking with your kids about vaping will let them know that you’re concerned about their health.

These tips are from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health at http://makesmokinghistory.org/.
E-Cigarettes and Your Health

E-Cigarettes are electronic devices that heat a liquid (containing nicotine or other drugs) and produce an aerosol, or mix of small particles in the air. They come in many shapes and sizes; some look like regular cigarettes while others are disguised as everyday devices including USB flash drives, pens, credit cards or sweatshirt “hoodie” strings. Using an E-Cigarette is often called “vaping” or “Juuling.”

Most E-Cigarettes contain nicotine – the addictive drug in regular tobacco products. Research has shown nicotine to damage the adolescent brain, which keeps developing until age 25. Using nicotine in adolescence can harm the parts of the brain that control attention, learning, mood and impulse control. Each time a new memory is created, or a new skill is learned, stronger connections – or synapses – are built between brain cells. Young people’s brains build synapses faster than adult brains. Nicotine changes the way these synapses are formed. Using nicotine in adolescence may also increase risk for future addiction to other drugs.

Scientists are still learning about the long term health effects of E-Cigarettes. Children and adults have been poisoned by swallowing, breathing, or absorbing e-cigarette liquid through their skin or eyes. E-Cigarette aerosol is NOT harmless “water vapor.” The aerosol users breathe can contain harmful substances including nicotine, flavoring such as diacetyl (a chemical linked to lung disease), volatile organic compounds, cancer-causing chemicals and heavy metals such as nickel, tin and lead.

E-Cigarettes are not legal for youth to use or possess under the age of eighteen. To purchase a Juul device online, the customer must be twenty-one. Despite these age restrictions, one in three Kansas youth have experimented with E-Cigarettes. Parents, schools, health providers and law enforcement can combat the youth E-Cigarette use epidemic by becoming informed, updating public tobacco policies, and setting a good example by being tobacco free.

You can find more helpful information and resources from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment at https://resisttobacco.org/.