

JUULing: What Pediatricians and Families Need to Know

What is a JUUL?

JUUL (pronounced “jewel”) is a brand of e-cigarette made by JUUL Labs Inc.

JUUL has grown quickly in popularity since introduction to the market in 2015, fueled by a serious following among youth and young adults.

JUUL’s popularity among youth raises significant concerns for pediatric health.



JUUL Characteristics:

JUUL is a sleek, small e-cigarette that resembles a flash drive. Unlike other types of e-cigarettes, JUUL does not look like a traditional cigarette and thus may not be immediately identifiable as a vaping device. Due to their size, JUUL devices are discrete and can be easily concealed in a fist or a pocket.

JUUL operates by heating a “pod” of e-liquid containing nicotine, flavorings and other substances. When heated, the e-liquid creates an aerosol which is inhaled by the user.

JUUL has spawned its own terminology: use of these devices is called “juuling.”

Public Health Concerns:

JUUL comes in youth-friendly flavors, including mango, mint and fruit-medley. For decades, the tobacco industry has used flavors to attract youth to their products.¹ Youth cite flavors as a common reason for e-cigarette use.²

JUUL is highly addictive. The concentration of nicotine in JUUL is more than double the concentration found in other e-cigarettes. This high concentration is a serious concern for youth, who are already uniquely susceptible to nicotine addiction. The addictive potential is so high that the US Surgeon General has declared that youth use of nicotine in any form is unsafe.³

JUUL users have a significant risk of becoming cigarette smokers. Youth who use e-cigarettes are more likely to progress to smoking traditional cigarettes.^{3,4}

JUULing is increasingly common in high school and college campuses. Educators report that youth are using JUUL in classrooms, hallways and restrooms, and are sharing devices with their peers. This social use encourages non-users to try JUUL, and enables students who are too young to purchase these products, or who could not otherwise afford them, to access them through peers.

References:

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta (GA): U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2012.*
2. Tsai J, Walton K, Coleman BN, et al. *Reasons for Electronic Cigarette Use Among Middle and High School Students—National Youth Tobacco Survey, United States, 2016. MMWR 2018;67:196-200.*
3. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults. A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2016.*
4. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine. 2018. *Public Health Consequences of E-Cigarettes. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.*