Test Your Knowledge
How does vaping affect your body? Let’s test your knowledge.

1. The respiratory system plays a key role in eliminating carbon dioxide from your body.
   a. True   b. False

2. Vaping does not affect your risk of contracting COVID-19.
   a. True   b. False

3. Popcorn lung, a condition sometimes caused by vaping, does not have a cure.
   a. True   b. False

4. Collapsed lung can be caused by vaping.
   a. True   b. False

5. Only older adult populations are at risk for dying from COVID-19.
   a. True   b. False

6. If you have a collapsed lung, you may be treated with supplemental oxygen, chest tubes, or surgery.
   a. True   b. False

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The Best Thing You Can Do During the Pandemic: Quit Vaping

The COVID-19 pandemic is a stressful time for everyone. Stress can lead to greater tobacco consumption, but it is critical to consider reducing or stopping that consumption. The most effective and safest way to quit is to consult a medical professional. In addition to receiving medical guidance, some other tips are to:

• Reflect on what triggers you to vape
• Incorporate new, less harmful daily rituals (e.g., making a cup of tea or going for a walk)
• Join support networks online
• Enlist help and support from loved ones
• Avoid situations that tempt you to vape
• Picture your life without vaping

Quitting may be difficult and require several tries, but you owe it to yourself and loved ones to try.

The COVID-19 AND VAPING

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Dangers of Vaping to Your Respiratory System

The respiratory system keeps you alive by administering oxygen through your blood stream and organs. The organs, tissues, airways, lungs, and blood vessels all work together to fuel your body’s essential need for oxygen. The respiratory system then eliminates the byproduct of oxygen processing, carbon dioxide. These steps are the basic process behind your every inhale and exhale.

If you’ve ever entered a holding-your-breath-competition, you know how uncomfortable it is to not be able to breathe. Unlike a contest, however, some people are not able to resume breathing normally when they struggle for air. Vaping can lead to conditions that require intensive medical treatments to breathe effectively. Some conditions that vaping can lead to are “popcorn lung,” lipoid pneumonia, and collapsed lung.

“Popcorn lung,” or bronchiolitis obliterans, is caused by the inhalation of a chemical in many vapes, known as Diacetyl. This chemical inflames internal air passages and can leave scar tissue. These effects make it difficult for the individual to breathe and causes excessive coughing. Unfortunately, there is no known cure or treatment for this condition.

Lipoid pneumonia is different than regular pneumonia because it enters the respiratory system through oils in vapor. Like traditional pneumonia, symptoms can include coughing, difficulty breathing, and blood in your mucus.

Collapsed lung is about as jarring as the name sounds. Before vaping, collapsed lung was typically seen in gunshot cases when the bullet punctures the lungs and creates a hole, like an innertube being punctured. Collapsed lung also occurs when blisters and tiny tears are present in the lungs and worsened by an external cause, such as vaping. When a patient has collapsed lung they may be treated with supplemental oxygen, chest tubes, or surgery.

Scientists have also recently discovered a new vaping-related respiratory illness, E-cigarette or Vaping Product Use-Associated Lung Injury (EVALI). EVALI is a potentially fatal respiratory illness recognized by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) after an increase of vaping related hospital admissions. One contributing factor to EVALI is the addition of Vitamin E-acetate.

Dangers of Vaping to Your Immune System

Not only is vaping a threat to your respiratory system, but new studies have found that it is a threat to your immune system, as well. The immune system acts as a fierce defender of your body by protecting it from harmful substances, such as bacteria, toxins, and viruses. When the immune system comes into contact with a harmful substance, it springs into action to eliminate the threat.

Vaping directly affects immune system cells that are known to remove bacteria and other harmful particles. By weakening the body’s cellular response, vaping may make you more susceptible to contracting an illness, which can be especially dangerous during the time of COVID-19.

Because the COVID-19 virus can have such detrimental effects on the body, it’s important to have a strong task force fighting against it. If immune system cells are being killed off from vaping, then the body has a smaller army to fight against it at an early stage.

Further, vaping causes bodily inflammation which has a negative effect on the immune system. Though inflammation is an essential immune system reaction at times, chronic inflammation (through causes such as vaping) can weaken the immune system and lead to chronic diseases such as diabetes and cancer. Through chronic inflammation, your body’s immune system begins to damage other organs.

At a time when a deadly virus is spreading at unprecedented rates, it’s important to ensure we’re doing all that we can to strengthen our immune systems, not tear them down. Vaping pokes holes in the immune system’s armor and weakens the defense.