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## **Depression & Anxiety in Teens Linked to Vaping**

In recent years, there has been a surge in the number of teenagers vaping or using electronic cigarettes. According to a Kansas State Department of Education survey, more than 48% of Kansas high school students have tried e-cigarettes and 22% are currently users. While vaping is often marketed as a less harmful alternative to smoking cigarettes, research has shown that it can have many negative effects on mental health, particularly for teens.

It is important to note that e-cigarettes contain nicotine, which is a highly addictive substance. Nicotine can alter the developing brain and increase the risk of depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems. According to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control), adolescents who vape are twice as likely to report symptoms of depression and anxiety as those who do not. Nicotine can also impair impulse control and decision-making skills, making it more difficult for teens to resist using other drugs.

Additionally, vaping can lead to nicotine addiction, which can be difficult for teens to overcome. Nicotine withdrawal symptoms can include irritability, anxiety, and depression, which can worsen mental health problems.

In addition to nicotine, e-cigarettes can also contain other harmful chemicals, such as heavy metals and ultrafine particles. These chemicals can damage the lungs and other organs, and they may also contribute to mental health problems. The combination of nicotine, other harmful chemicals, and addiction all contribute to the negative effects of vaping on teen mental health.

Here are some tips for parents and educators:

- Talk to teens about the risks of vaping, including the negative effects on mental health.
- Be a good role model by not smoking or vaping yourself.
- Set clear rules about vaping at home and school.
- Monitor your teen's activities and watch for signs of vaping, such as hiding e-cigarettes or vaping supplies.

- If you think your teen is vaping, talk to them about it in a supportive way. Encourage them to seek help from a healthcare professional to quit vaping. Visit [teen.smokefree.gov](http://teen.smokefree.gov) for free resources regarding quitting vaping and staying vape-free.

To learn more about vaping check out the most recent K-State Research and Extension Living Well webinar recording, titled: "It's Not So Kool to JUUL" at <http://bit.ly/livingwellwedJUUL>.

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