

Protecting Our Environment

Pollution from Production to “Disposal”: The Lifecycle of a Vape

(NAPS)—In each step of their lifecycle, vape products can harm our environment with three forms of toxic pollution: plastic waste, hazardous waste, and electronic waste (e-waste).

Step 1: Production

From the very beginning of production, vapes are devastating for the environment. Sourcing raw materials for these products is highly resource intensive, requiring not just plastics, but heavy metals, lithium-ion for batteries, and nicotine from tobacco plants. Mining lithium for vape batteries is a major source of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, requires the use of chemicals and immense amounts of water, and leaves toxic waste in its wake. Plus, the nicotine used in these products comes from tobacco plants, a destructive crop that causes mass deforestation, soil contamination, and water depletion.

Step 2: A Polluting Sales Model

The majority of vapes are designed for single or short-term use. This sales model ensures that consumers constantly need to purchase new products or pre-filled cartridges, which creates an ever-growing waste problem.

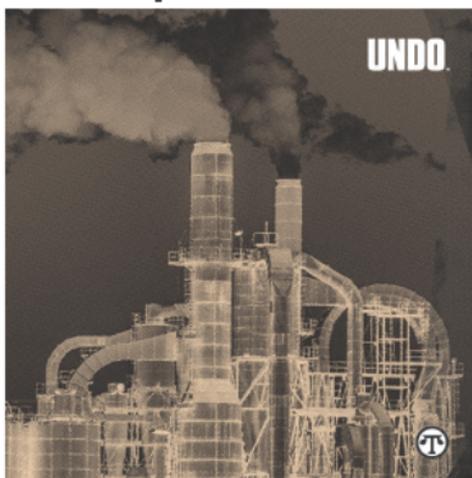
Consider that 3.6 million U.S. adults vape daily. If just one-third of those adults use a single pod or disposable vape a day, that would produce nearly half a billion pieces of vape waste annually. And this isn't counting the estimated 2.5 million U.S. middle and high school students who vape!

Almost every part of a vape is made of plastic, which never biodegrades. Instead, it breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces of plastic called microplastics. Microplastics have been linked to fertility issues, intestinal damage, and even mutations in DNA.

The tobacco industry markets disposable vape products as cheap, sleek, and full of flavors that mask the harsh taste of chemicals used in tobacco products. This is to profit off addicting the next generation with no regard for their health or the environmental impact of vaping.

Step 3: Vape Disposal & Decay

So here we are: Toxic plastic. Hazardous waste. E-waste pollution.



Every puff on a vape, experts advise, pollutes the environment in more ways than many people realize.

Big Tobacco can offer little to no guidance on how to dispose of their products because there is no safe way to do so. The electronic waste components of vapes like lithium-ion batteries, heating elements, microcontroller chips, and chargers are extremely dangerous if disposed of in household trash.

If vapes are put into trash receptacles, they pose a fire risk in waste and recycling facilities, threatening workers' safety. Vape plastics cannot be recycled because they contain residue of highly concentrated nicotine and heavy metals, which classify vapes as hazardous waste. So discarded vapes not only contribute to a growing plastic pollution problem but release toxic chemicals into our ground and water.

As the nicotine, mercury, lead, bromines, and battery acid from these littered products leach into the environment, they can also be eaten by wildlife or pets. Nicotine, which is found in almost all vapes, is a neurotoxin and one of the most toxic of all poisons.

Break the Toxic Cycle

Don't let Big Tobacco lie to you: the bottom line is vapes cause harm to our environment at every phase of their lifecycle and for many years after they're discarded.

Hold Big Tobacco accountable for the devastating environmental impact of their vape products. To learn more, visit UNDO.org.