The program begins with several teens talking about e-cigarettes. Clearly they are misinformed about the dangers of these products. Next, the hosts tell viewers that nicotine is one of the most addictive substances in the world. The newest delivery system is the e-cigarette—a battery-powered inhaler than is designed to mimic traditional cigarette smoking.

One host promises, “This program will look at what we know and what we don’t know about e-cigarettes.” After identifying the components of typical e-cigarettes, viewers hear from cardiopulmonary specialist, Dr. Jonathan Whiteson. What do e-cigarettes contain? Whiteson says, “We know from studies of the vapor that there are probably more chemicals in the vapor than just nicotine, including diethylene glycol, which is a carcinogen, as well as metals like iron and copper.”

The doctor and hosts next discuss whether vaping e-cigarettes is any safer than smoking tobacco cigarettes. Although e-cigs may contain fewer chemicals, no tar and no smoke, they are far from benign. Dr. Whiteson says, “There is so much we don’t know about the vapor from electronic cigarettes…I could never say that e-cigarettes are safe or safer than anything else.”

The information from the hosts and medical expert are interspersed with comments from young people who clearly are confused about whether e-cigarettes are safe for smokers or for those nearby. “It doesn’t give you secondhand smoke,” says one. Dr. Whiteson clarifies: “There is a vapor that is exhaled by somebody who has inhaled the nicotine vapor. This is what we would call the secondhand exposure. There is good evidence to suggest that non-smokers [who] have been around someone who is using an e-cigarette [will] have detectable levels of nicotine and the byproducts within their blood system as well.”

The teen speakers describe why e-cigarettes are compelling to young people. “The colors are fun. They’re different flavors. It doesn’t feel like you’re smoking cigarettes.” This leads to a discussion of the ways that manufacturers market these products to young, tech-savvy people, including high schoolers and even middle schoolers. Research shows that seven percent of high school students who have used e-cigarettes had never smoked a traditional cigarette—indicating that these devices even have an appeal among steadfast anti-smokers.

E-cigarettes are not regulated by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) because, technically, they are not a tobacco product despite the fact that they contain nicotine. Companies have cashed in on this loophole by promoting their vaping devices on television—something that cigarette companies are no longer allowed to do. Dr. Whiteson offers a chilling summation: “The tobacco industry is a science. And they continue to study the most effective way to deliver nicotine to the body. Because, if they can deliver nicotine effectively, they can much more rapidly get you addicted to the cigarette. There is also good evidence to suggest that an e-cigarette will be the first introduction to nicotine in a teenager, and then they will move on to using tobacco products.”

At this point, viewers hear from Molly, a young e-cigarette user who describes how she became hooked. What began as an attempt to quit smoking traditional cigarettes soon turned into a new addiction. She experienced many of the same side effects that accompany conventional smoking—nausea, sore throat and more. The variety of flavor choices also appealed to her.
The hosts explain that nicotine is an addictive stimulant. Because it is so addictive, it doesn’t take long before a user wants to smoke or “vape” it more frequently. Dr. Whiteson points out that, because teens’ brains are still developing, exposure to nicotine can lead to a greater propensity in later years to become addicted to other substances, including drugs and alcohol. It is “much more likely that an adolescent who has been exposed to nicotine in their teen years will be using tobacco products and will be using alcohol and other drugs when they’re older.”

The hosts turn to a discussion of whether e-cigarettes are an effective way to stop smoking. They distinguish between these vaping products, which often have an unknown quantity of nicotine, and proven smoking cessation methods such as nicotine gum, nicotine patches or lozenges. The products designed to help smokers quit include clear directions and a timeline that smokers can follow as they cut back on nicotine. E-cigarettes offer none of these benefits.

A young adult named Miles describes his own path into e-cigarette dependence. “The first time I bought it, I was thinking I’d have it for weeks and weeks and never really use it. But the longer I had it, the quicker they tend to go.” Now, however, his need is far greater. “Generally, when I’m in between electronic cigarettes, it’s agony. I almost always go get one as soon as one finishes just because it is something I kind of have to have.”

As the video draws to a close, the teen speakers, hosts and Dr. Whiteson underscore the main points of the program: avoid e-cigarettes (and tobacco in general) and don’t allow yourself to become a guinea pig for an industry that is unregulated and may be adding carcinogenic chemicals to a mixture that is already addictive, dangerous and potentially life-threatening.
The video and print materials in *What’s Up With E-Cigarettes?* are compatible with the Performance Indicators of the *National Health Education Standards* (grades 6 – 8) as indicated below.

**National Health Education Standard 1:** Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.

**Performance indicators for grades 6 – 8**
1.8.1 Analyze the relationship between healthy behaviors and personal health.
1.8.6 Explain how appropriate health care can promote personal health.
1.8.7 Describe the benefits of and barriers to practicing healthy behaviors.
1.8.8 Examine the likelihood of injury or illness if engaging in unhealthy behaviors.
1.8.9 Examine the potential seriousness of injury or illness if engaging in unhealthy behaviors.

**National Health Education Standard 2:** Students will analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors.

**Performance indicators for grades 6 – 8**
2.8.2 Describe the influence of culture on health beliefs, practices, and behaviors.
2.8.3 Describe how peers influence healthy and unhealthy behaviors.
2.8.5 Analyze how messages from media influence health behaviors.
2.8.7 Explain how the perceptions of norms influence healthy and unhealthy behaviors.

**National Health Education Standard 3:** Students will demonstrate the ability to access valid information, products, and services to enhance health.

**Performance indicators for grades 6 – 8**
3.8.2 Access valid health information from home, school, and community.
3.8.4 Describe situations that may require professional health services.

**National Health Education Standard 4:** Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.

**Performance indicators for grades 6 – 8**
4.8.1 Apply effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills to enhance health.
4.8.2 Demonstrate refusal and negotiation skills that avoid or reduce health risks.
National Health Education Standard 5: Students will demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.

Performance indicators for grades 6 – 8
5.8.1 Identify circumstances that can help or hinder healthy decision making.
5.8.3 Distinguish when individual or collaborative decision making is appropriate.
5.8.5 Predict the potential short-term impact of each alternative on self and others.

National Health Education Standard 6: Students will demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting skills to enhance health.

Performance indicators for grades 6 – 8
6.8.1 Assess personal health practices.
6.8.4 Describe how personal health goals can vary with changing abilities, priorities, and responsibilities.

National Health Education Standard 7: Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.

Performance indicators for grades 6 – 8
7.8.1 Explain the importance of assuming responsibility for personal health behaviors.
7.8.2 Demonstrate healthy practices and behaviors that will maintain or improve the health of self and others.
7.8.3 Demonstrate behaviors to avoid or reduce health risks to self and others.

National Health Education Standard 8: Students will demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family, and community health.

Performance indicators for grades 6 – 8
8.8.1 State a health-enhancing position on a topic and support it with accurate information.
8.8.2 Demonstrate how to influence and support others to make positive health choices.
The video and print materials in *What's Up With E-Cigarettes?* are compatible with the Performance Indicators of the National Health Education Standards (grades 9 – 12) as indicated below.

**National Health Education Standard 1:** Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.

**Performance indicators for grades 9 – 12**

1.12.1 Predict how healthy behaviors can affect health status.

1.12.6 Analyze the relationship between access to health care and health status.

1.12.7 Compare and contrast the benefits of and barriers to practicing a variety of healthy behaviors.

1.12.8 Analyze personal susceptibility to injury, illness, or death if engaging in unhealthy behaviors.

1.12.9 Analyze the potential severity of injury or illness if engaging in unhealthy behaviors.

**National Health Education Standard 2:** Students will analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors.

**Performance indicators for grades 9 – 12**

2.12.2 Analyze how the culture supports and challenges health beliefs, practices, and behaviors.

2.12.3 Analyze how peers influence healthy and unhealthy behaviors.

2.12.7 Analyze how the perceptions of norms influence healthy and unhealthy behaviors.

**National Health Education Standard 3:** Students will demonstrate the ability to access valid information, products, and services to enhance health.

**Performance indicators for grades 9 – 12**

3.12.2 Use resources from home, school, and community that provide valid health information.

3.12.4 Determine when professional health services may be required.

**National Health Education Standard 4:** Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.

**Performance indicators for grades 9 – 12**

4.12.1 Use skills for communicating effectively with family, peers, and others to enhance health.

4.12.2 Demonstrate refusal, negotiation, and collaboration skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.
National Health Education Standard 5: Students will demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.

**Performance indicators for grades 9 – 12**
- 5.12.1 Examine barriers that can hinder healthy decision making.
- 5.12.3 Justify when individual or collaborative decision making is appropriate.
- 5.12.5 Predict the potential short-term and long-term impact of each alternative on self and others.

National Health Education Standard 6: Students will demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting skills to enhance health.

**Performance indicators for grades 9 – 12**
- 6.12.1 Assess personal health practices and overall health status.
- 6.12.4 Formulate an effective long-term personal health plan.

National Health Education Standard 7: Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.

**Performance indicators for grades 9 – 12**
- 7.12.1 Analyze the role of individual responsibility for enhancing health.
- 7.12.2 Demonstrate a variety of healthy practices and behaviors that will maintain or improve the health of self and others.
- 7.12.3 Demonstrate a variety of behaviors to avoid or reduce health risks to self and others.

National Health Education Standard 8: Students will demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family, and community health.

**Performance indicators for grades 9 – 12**
- 8.12.1 Utilize accurate peer and societal norms to formulate a health-enhancing message.
- 8.12.2 Demonstrate how to influence and support others to make positive health choices.