

## Vaping by the numbers

### **\$2 billion**

Amount of bonuses given to Juul's 1,500 employees

### **35%**

Of Juul is owned by cigarette maker Altria

### **\$38 billion**

Market value of Juul at the end of 2018

### **27%**

Amount of high schoolers who have vaped in the last month, according to an NIH survey

### **Dec. 18**

Date U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams declared vaping among youth "an epidemic"

# An Enticing Trend

By Cody Athay  
and Kylie Collins

*Staff Writers*

A nicotine buzz wrapped in yummy flavors. That's the driving appeal of e-cigarettes.

And blowing a cloud, let's face it, looks pretty cool.

What's not so appealing is the unseen damage being done by nicotine. In the short run, your blood pressure, respiration and heart rate increase, and blood circulation to your toes and fingers decrease. Your blood-sugar levels increase a bit, and sleeping could be a problem, according to the National Institutes of Health.

Stick with the habit and the NIH said your risk of cardiovascular, respiratory and gastrointestinal disorders increases. Your immune system weakens and your reproductive system – your ability to have a baby – could be compromised.

Nicotine contributes to DNA mutations that can lead to cancer. At the same time, the nicotine causes resistance to the chemotherapy and radiation to fight that cancer, according to the NIH.

These dangers are reasons why the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency banned the use of nicotine as a pesticide in 2014. Before World War II, nicotine was a widely used insecticide that was eventually replaced by more safe and effective chemicals.

Despite the dangers, vaping is continuing to ride a wave of popularity. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration estimates that 3.62 million middle and high school students in the United States use e-cigarettes. That is a 78 percent increase since 2017, according to *The Atlantic* magazine.

"Before a party, I was in the AL (Abraham Lincoln) parking lot hanging out," said a St. Albert student who will remain anonymous. "One of my friends pulled out a vape and was passing it around, and I tried it."

Another student learned about vaping through a friend's friend.

Students are vaping out of curiosity or to fit in and be cool. Or they bow to peer pressure. They may continue because of the feeling they get from the nicotine.

"Nicotine releases something, probably similar to dopamine, which gives people a

euphoric feeling," said St. Albert Biology Teacher Devin Yeoman. "People keep doing it more and more because they want to keep feeling that euphoria, and that's probably how addictions form."

One of the most popular brands of e-cigarettes is Juul, and it is used by students at St. Albert. One reason some students go to the bathroom during class is to use it as a "Juul room." The Juuls appeal to teens because they are easy to hide in the palm of a hand or coat pocket.

The FDA is fighting to keep Juuls and other e-cigs out of teenage hands by creating new regulations that require stores selling flavored e-cigarettes to stock them somewhere people under 18 cannot enter. Juul also decided to stop selling flavored pods in retail stores and will only sell them online to people 21 and over.

But that's not stopping teens from getting their hands on e-cigarettes. Teens are buying supplies from friends that are of age.

There are a variety of juice and pod flavors to insert into the e-cigarettes. You can inhale mango, mint, grape, blue raspberry pomegranate and many more flavors.

"A pod usually lasts me one day," said a St. Albert student.

Another student said, "During school days pods last me a day, but if it's during a weekend they can last for a couple of days."

One Juul pod contains 5 percent nicotine, which is equal to smoking 20 cigarettes, or a pack a day, according to Iowa Students for Tobacco Education and Prevention. Nicotine poisoning is possible with excessive use of electronic smoking devices.

The FDA classifies most e-cigarettes as "Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems" because that was the initial purpose of the first electronic cigarettes. The first commercially successful e-cigarette was invented in 2003 by a Chinese pharmacist named Hon Lik, who wanted to create a safer alternative to traditional tobacco products. Most e-cigarettes were developed with a similar intention; they gave tobacco smokers a way to satisfy their craving for nicotine in normal cigarettes, while reducing the cancer risk.

Despite the health risks, students vape because they like it.

A St. Albert student, who recognizes the addictive effects, said she enjoys vaping.

# Lures SA Students

"If I could stop, I definitely wouldn't," she said.

Another student feels the same way.

"Even if I wanted to, I couldn't bring myself to stop," she said.

St. Albert junior Ryan Hughes has seen the popularity of vaping grow.

"The number of people vaping here regularly isn't as high as say LC (Lewis Central), but you'd be surprised by the number of middle school students do-

ing it," he said. "There's always at least one person doing it in the parking lot, sometimes with a small group of friends."

Senior Maddie Skinner agreed.

"If one person has one (a vape), they share it with others."

Still, there are many students who have not tried vaping and have no intention to start.

"I play sports," Hughes said, "and I don't want to mess up my lungs."

## E-cig Habit Requires Buying Lots of Supplies

**By Emma Carlson**

*Staff writer*

The widespread vaping trend has created a whole new industry with new products and terms that are unfamiliar to many consumers.

There are multiple popular vapes among students, but the most popular is the Juul. Juuls are sold at any vape/tobacco store and some gas stations. A Juul starter kit comes with the device and includes a charger and four "pods." It costs \$39.99 on the Juul website, but can be found for \$19.99 in many gas stations. Juul is not a refillable vape; you must buy pods. Pods come in packs of four and run about \$12.99 in many gas stations. Some of the pod flavors are crème burley, mango, mint, tobacco, cucumber and fruit. With about 200 puffs per pod, users could go through about half a pod per day, spending nearly \$70 a month on pods for a constant supply.

Other popular vapes are the Suorin Air, Suorin Drop, and Suorin Vagon. The Suorin Air runs for \$22.99 on the Suorin website and has a refillable cartridge. The Suorin Drop and Suorin Vagon run for \$28.99 on the website and use a refillable cartridge. The website sells a 60 ml bottle of refill or "juice" for \$19.99. When filled, the Suorin devices typically last two to three days. They can be filled about 27 times with a 60 ml bottle of juice. The refillable cartridge needs to be switched out about once a month. So for a constant supply, vape users are spending about \$20 a month buying juice plus \$4.99 buying a new cartridge.

## Poll: SA Not Immune from Vaping

**By Kylie Collins**

*Staff Writer*

A small majority of St. Albert students who participated in a high school Google poll said they have vaped.

Out of 88 high school students participating in the poll conducted at the beginning of January, 53 percent said they have vaped; 47 percent said they never have.

Among those 53 percent, almost a quarter of them vape three or more times a day. About 16 percent vape a few times a month. About 9 percent said they only tried vaping, just once or twice.

The most popular brand of vape product is Juul – owned by 33 percent of the vaping students. But the poll showed about 8 percent of the students have purchased other brands - Suorin, Badge, Blu, Prisma, Dab pen, Prince Stick, Drag and Sofia from Shisha. About 57 percent said they don't own any e-cigarettes.

About 26 percent of the students said they have been vaping more than a year; about 4 percent said six months to a year; and about 11 percent said one month to six months. About 7 percent said they just started in the last month.

The habit is proving costly. About 17 percent of the students said they are spending more than \$80 a month to vape. Another 3 percent are spending between \$50 and \$80 per month. About 17 percent said they spend \$50 or less on vaping products each month.

Because consumers must be 18 to legally purchase vaping materials, about 18 percent of the students said they get their supplies through a sibling or friend, while about 15 percent said their parent buys materials for them. About 6 percent buy from a vape store or grocery store, and about 7 percent purchase from a gas station.

Students stated a wide variety of reasons for vaping. The majority of students who answered said they enjoyed the buzz it can give off, they would feel relaxed and like a sense of peace in the moment the buzz happens. A couple of other students said they did it when they were just hanging out with their friends because it is a fun thing to do.

Students who don't vape and who have never tried it also have a variety of reasons for avoiding the products. Most students think it is unhealthy and that it is a waste of time, money, and friends. Some students have their own health problems with their lungs, like asthma. Some want to set a good example for younger kids, and others want to do well in sports. Still, others just simply don't want to get in trouble with their parents if they find out their student is vaping.



## Her Dreams

# *Dissipated* into the *Cloud*

**By Kylie Collins**

*Staff Writer*

I was 15 when I vaped for the first time.

It was my freshman year - the night of the school musical. I was supposed to be doing hair and makeup, but I wasn't needed.

One of my friends hanging out in the parking lot called me and told me to come to her car. I went there and saw three friends in the car. I hopped in and saw one of them had a vape. I had never done it before so I tried it. Then a car of boys rolled up and they were vaping, too, so I kept doing it - not because I wanted to fit in, but because I liked to do it. Afterward I kept vaping whenever I was with one of my friends who had a vape.

Once Juul came out, I had someone buy me one so I wouldn't have to borrow from my friends. That instant buzz came after a couple of hits, and it was amazing. My body would relax, and I thought it was awesome. I would bring it to school and go to the bathroom and hit it and walk out like nothing. I was probably buying pods every couple of weeks. I would do it so often that I guess you could say I was addicted to it. The cost for my habit was about \$20 each week, but the price I eventually paid was much higher.

I knew it wasn't good for me because I am an athlete and I have asthma. My mom always told me how bad my lungs were as a baby because I was born a couple weeks early.

My first Juul broke after dropping it on the ground and then I got another one, but I gave it away to a friend because I wanted to focus more on being in shape for swimming. I would still hit other people's Juuls whenever I could, but not as often as I was before.

At the beginning of junior year, I was swimming on the girls' high school team with the Lewis Central girls. I had one friend from LC that had a vape, and I would have her bring it inside the locker room so I could hit it after practice. When we would travel to swim meets she would bring it and we would hit it on the bus, but some of the girls could smell it, so we stopped.

During the week of regionals, I stopped vaping because I really wanted to return to state this year. Last year, I placed 11<sup>th</sup> at state in the 100 backstroke and competed in the medley relay, the 200 free relay and the 400 free relay. This year I made the list of state qualifiers for the backstroke, although I had a slow time. I also made state as part of the medley relay and possibly the 200 free relay.

I didn't think any of the girls would snitch on me, but I know I had two people on the team who wanted to see me fail, so we had a talk as a whole team about vaping because someone spoke up about it.

The week of state one of my coaches pulled me out of practice. She told me someone said I was vaping, so she checked my bag and found an empty Juul pod and a small bottle of vape juice.

Being a swimmer you don't normally clean out your bag. I meant to throw all that stuff away but just forgot about it. My coach took the vaping supplies and gave them to my head coach. He called me into his office after practice. He didn't want to see me not swim at state, but he had to follow the rules in the handbook. He told me the LC athletic director would get word of this and tell St. Albert's athletic director.

The next day at school I was called into Ken Schreiber's office. He told me that I would not be swimming at state because I had nicotine products on me in a school environment. I had one day of in-school suspension and 15 days probation.

I was so upset that I let my team down. I made sure to keep in contact with the girls to see how everyone was doing. My swim team is my family, and I was missing out on the competition, the celebration and the bonding that takes place during the trip.

I also let down my mom and dad, and also myself.

In my opinion, vaping wasn't worth it. I put in a lot of hard work into swimming that season - two-a-days starting at 5:30 a.m. and coming home from practice at 6:20 p.m. during districts - just to not swim at state. Going to state was my ultimate goal, and I ruined it by vaping.