

## **In The Mix With AOD**

### **“In The Mix” With AOD Episode Six- Overcoming Vaping**

#### **E-cigarettes entered the market in the early 2000’s and hit their peak popularity in 2014.**

With fruity flavors and the promise of less harmful effects compared to traditional cigarettes, there’s no question about the appeal vaping has for young adults. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, vaping in social settings or for fun has become increasingly more prevalent among college students as a way to obtain a buzz that is similar to the “high” that cigarettes offer.

Hey, I’m Bethann Long and welcome back to this week’s episode of “In The Mix” with AOD, a podcast provided by the Alcohol and Other Drugs Services here at Grand Valley. We are just a few more days away from some much needed time away from school and before we know it exam time will be upon us. Hang in there guys, we’re almost there! In this week’s episode we will be discussing a topic that is a hot debate in our country right now and has been for a few years now- the growing numbers of vaping among young adults. I can guarantee that we all know of someone who has experimented with vaping before, and may have developed a habit from it. We will be diving into Tobacco 21, which raised the legal age of buying tobacco products from 18 to 21 years of age, the reasoning behind young adults’ appeal towards vaping products, the effects it can have on the body, and the path of recovery after quitting.

There has been a recent push in our country in an effort to stop tobacco products from landing in the hands of teens and young adults. On December 20, 2019, Tobacco 21 was passed by Congress, ultimately raising the minimum age for purchasing tobacco products from 18 to 21 years of age nationwide. In March of 2015, a report from the National Academy of Medicine revealed that Tobacco 21 could help prevent 223,000 deaths among people born between 2000 and 2019, also including reducing lung cancer deaths by 50,000. Despite this law’s attempt to help keep tobacco products out of the hands of teens and young adults, Tobacco 21 doesn’t eliminate all flavored tobacco products or stop online sales which gives young adults ways to work around the law.

Despite these laws being put in place to help the high amount of tobacco use among young adults, this hasn’t stopped many from finding ways around it. Which brings up the question- why do college aged people choose to experiment with vaping in the first place? Young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 are using e-cigarettes at increasing rates. Use of e-cigarettes everyday or some days increased from 2.4% in 2012 and 2013 to 5.2% in 2017, and increased again to 7.6% in 2018 based on a recent analysis. It’s been found that many choose to start vaping ultimately just to try it. Many college students believe that vaping is less harmful than regular cigarettes, which is seen as another motivating factor to start. A 2016 report from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey found that 44.3% of current young adult e-cigarette users were never smokers before trying e-cigarettes. This habit becomes addicting rather quickly because nicotine changes the way that synapses are formed in your brain, which are the connections that are made when a new skill is learned. Whether experimentation is why college students find themselves turning to nicotine to help deal with stress or anxiety, creating a cycle of nicotine dependence; however, nicotine can also be the source of this stress and anxiety.

According to many health professionals, quitting vaping, and even just smoking in general, is one of the best things you can do for your health. Ultimately, smoking harms nearly every organ in your body. Nicotine is the primary ingredient that is found in regular cigarettes and e-cigarettes which is the addictive

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and toxic substance that is found in tobacco products. This is what causes you to crave to smoke and suffer from withdrawal symptoms when you ignore these cravings. Nicotine withdrawal symptoms include irritability, restlessness, feeling anxious or depressed, trouble sleeping, problems concentrating, and cravings for nicotine. Many people may decide to keep using tobacco products to help relieve these symptoms which ultimately just causes the whole cycle to start again. There are extensive effects that vaping has on your brain which includes slower brain development that affects memory, concentration, learning, self-control, attention, mood, and addiction. Vaping also raises your blood pressure and spikes your adrenaline, which increases your heart rate.

Deciding to quit smoking is a truly difficult choice to make and sticking to staying away from smoking can be an even more difficult endeavor. First, try exploring what is leading your urges for using and experiment with other ways to cope with stress and any other concerns that may be encouraging these actions. Acknowledging why you are doing this to begin with will help you decide what your path to quitting is going to look like. If you are wanting to quit vaping, it's important to be prepared for the possible withdrawal symptoms that may occur. You can find alternatives for nicotine as well such as patches. Here at Grand Valley, the Alcohol and Other Drugs Services, offers quit kits to any Grand Valley State University students who are seeking to quit smoking. Quit kits are free to all students and can be picked up in 206 Student Services on the Allendale campus. These kits include: How To Stop Smoking Pocket Pal, Tobacco Use Tracker to wrap around the e-cigarette or cigarette pack, making it easier to note time and reason for smoking, and gums or mints to help the oral aspect of smoking. You can also pick up an aroma stress putty while you are in the office to help relieve the momentary stress that leads you to smoke. There are also local resources to help you through quitting smoking such as Tobacco Free For Good which is six sessions with no costs to you and has multiple sites throughout Kent County. There is also a Nicotine Anonymous Support Group on Saturday's at the Spectrum Health Kent Community Campus.

Vaping can be an easy habit to pick up, especially in college as you are being exposed to many new environments. However, this is a habit that can be truly difficult to quit if it is not done responsibly and with the right support system. Having friends and family who are there to support and encourage you through this journey of quitting vaping is important to make sure you stay on track. This has been the sixth episode of "In The Mix" with AOD. I hope you all have an amazing Thanksgiving Break and can't wait to bring more episodes to you soon!