A recent real-world study showed that E-cigs are as safe as a nicotine replacement for people trying to quit smoking.

Compared to those who used cigarettes or combined tobacco products, people who only used e-cigs or the nicotine patch had much lower levels of carcinogens and toxins associated with nicotine detected in their bodies.

Does this mean that E-cigs are safe? Not necessarily. There are some things to consider first. For example...

Most E-cig users are under 26, and the biggest demographic of e-cig users are minors.

- E-cig usage is occurring in youths who would not have smoked cigarettes or used other tobacco products.
- Young e-cig users are also more likely to start smoking traditional cigarettes versus non-e-cig users.

Furthermore, most e-cig users also smoke cigarettes.

According to the study, this would mean that more than 88% of people who smoke e-cigarettes have the same high harmful amounts of carcinogens and toxins in their system.

What does this mean for E-cigarettes?

This study shows that e-cigarettes can be as effective as nicotine patches when used by itself to quit smoking, but the overwhelming majority already smoke both e-cigs and traditional cigarettes at the same time. Furthermore, most e-cig users are minors and young adults who have already smoked traditional cigarettes, but are now more likely to smoke traditional cigarettes in the future.

E-cigarettes therefore function as a gateway drug to cigarettes for youths more so than a replacement therapy for adults, and should be regulated to keep minors from accessing tobacco.

Sources:
1. California Department of Public Health
2. American Lung Association
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
4. National Cancer Institute

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