

# Less harmful doesn't mean safe

Dear editor,

Re: "Vaping"

September is here, and along with the familiar sight of buses back on the road, and backpack-wearing students walking to school, is the unsettling number of young people vaping or still smoking.

With the news reporting about life-threatening vape related illness, we are reminded that although vaping may be less harmful than smoking, that does not mean it is safe. Vape is not harmless water vapour, it contains chemicals and heavy metals that when heated become an aerosol. Most vapes are a nicotine delivery system, and nicotine is highly addictive. Nicotine can alter brain development, affect memory, concentration, and may cause cognitive and behavioural problems. Young people who start out vaping are more likely to eventually become smokers.

Parents and caregivers: have a conversation with the young people in your lives around vaping. The advice from Health Canada is "If you don't smoke, don't vape."

It is also important to know that it is illegal to provide e-cigarettes to anyone less than 19 years old.

For more information on vaping visit [www.canada.ca/vaping](http://www.canada.ca/vaping).

Here's to a safe and healthy school year!

Sincerely,

Dr. Glenn Corneil

AMOH and CEO,

Timiskaming Health Unit