

## Council expectations of pharmacists on the use of Electronic Cigarettes/Vaping for smoking cessation.

### Council's position

**“It is the opinion of Council that, on the basis of existing guidance, pharmacists should not supply or recommend electronic cigarettes or vaping products to non-smokers. Pharmacists should only consider the supply or recommend the use of these products as part of a smoking cessation plan, after giving due consideration to the likely risks and benefits for the individual. Pharmacist assessment must be on a case by case basis and include review of the individual’s pre-existing conditions and /or treatments.”**

1. The Pharmacy Council wishes to provide pharmacists with guidance on recommending electronic cigarette/vaping use for smoking cessation.
2. In March 2011 the Government adopted the Smokefree 2025 goal for New Zealand<sup>1</sup>. The Ministry of Health recognises that electronic cigarettes may provide a significantly less harmful alternative to smoking and may contribute to the achievement of the Smokefree 2025 goal.
3. While electronic cigarettes may offer some smokers assistance in reducing or stopping smoking, pharmacists must also be aware of the risks associated with the use of electronic cigarettes and the implications of their unregulated status.
4. There are no longitudinal studies to describe the long-term effects of electronic cigarette use or vaping.
5. There is no electronic cigarette or vaping product that is approved by Medsafe. Because of this, it is difficult for pharmacists to provide the public with assurance of the quality, efficacy or safety of these products.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/preventative-health-wellness/tobacco-control/smokefree-aotearoa-2025>

6. The Ministry of Health has signalled it is likely to regulate vaping products in the near future and as an interim measure it launched a new website, <http://vapingfacts.health.nz/> , on 9 June 2019 to provide New Zealanders with a source of clear and credible information about vaping as a way to stop smoking.
7. Council recommends pharmacists utilise the Ministry website to access consistent information for the public regarding vaping and refer patients to the site when appropriate.
8. Pharmacists are bound by the Code of Ethics 2018, the Competence Standards 2015, and the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights. As part of the informed consent process, a pharmacist must discuss with their patients the potential risks associated with products they recommend or supply.
9. Council expects pharmacists to consider whether the supply of vaping products or electronic cigarettes aligns with their ethical and professional obligations. It is essential that pharmacists weigh up the potential positive versus negative effects of electronic cigarettes or vaping products upon the health outcomes of their patients and/or the public.
10. Patients must always be provided with credible information clearly outlining possible risks and benefits of the use of vaping products or electronic cigarettes.
11. Pharmacists should consider the advantages of recommending, where appropriate, smoking cessation products which are currently approved by Medsafe, such as nicotine replacement therapies.

## **Relevant Documents**

### **Legislation**

Smoke-free Environments Act 1990

### **Standards**

Competence Standards for the Pharmacy Profession 2015

### **Codes**

Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights

Pharmacy Council Code of Ethics 2018

### **Ministry of Health information**