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Going up in smoke: 5 myths around e-cigarettes

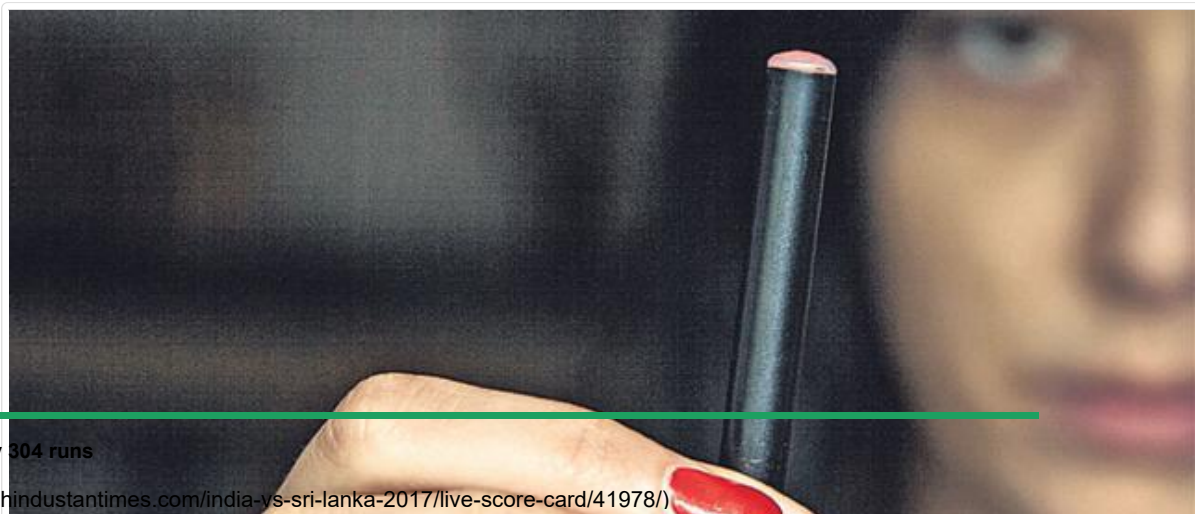
While recent research proves that vaping can be just as addictive as smoking, we look at myths surrounding the use of e-cigarettes.

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Updated: Aug 23, 2015 16:29 IST



Susan Jose
Hindustan Times



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While recent research proves that vaping can be just as addictive as smoking, we look at myths surrounding the use of e-cigarettes.

In a new study published in the American Chemical Society's journal, *Chemical Research In Toxicology*, researchers suggest that the e-cigarette may be just as addictive as its real counterpart.

Apart from this, lead author Riyad al-Lehebi and his colleagues from the University of Toronto, Canada, presented papers at the American Thoracic Society International Conference, which stated that there isn't enough proof to show that e-cigarettes are successful long-term solutions for those who want to kick the butt.

"Other agents such as medicines or nicotine chewing gums have been found to be better in helping people quit smoking than e-cigarettes," says oncologist Dr Anil Heroor.

Clearly, those who thought e-cigarettes are a bridge to quitting smoking had it wrong. In the light of this revelation, we ask experts to bust myths about e-cigarettes.

*** Myth 1: Electronic cigarettes are less harmful**

Not true. High-voltage e-cigarettes may generate formaldehyde at a greater level as compared to smoking. This raises one's cancer risk by about 5-15 times higher than long-term smoking.

*** Myth 2: They are safe electrical devices**

E-cigarettes can explode in your face. Some people have already sued manufacturers for the same. The manufacturers, however, claim that this happens if you use chargers that aren't compatible.



*** Myth 3: They do not contain toxins**

An analysis of e-cigarettes in 2009 by the FDA, USA, found that they contained detectable levels of known carcinogens and toxic chemicals to which users could be exposed.

*** Myth 4: They do not cause passive smoking**

There are no long-term studies to back claims that the vapour from e-cigarettes is less harmful than conventional smoke.

*** Myth 5: They do not cause cancer**

Cancer takes years to develop, and e-cigarettes were only recently introduced. It is almost impossible to determine if a product increases a person's risk of cancer or not until the product has been around for at least 15-20 years.

(With inputs from Dr Zakia Khan, interventional cardiologist and Dr Prashant Chhajed, chief pulmonologist, Fortis Hospital.)

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