

Healthy Families Lower Hutt position on vaping in smokefree environments

Healthy Families Lower Hutt is a Ministry of Health funded initiative that aims to create healthier places where we live, learn, work and play. We work with community leaders, prevention partners and organisations to ensure the places we spend our time support and promote our health and wellbeing. Smokefree environments are a key area of focus for us.

The Healthy Families Lower Hutt Strategic Leadership Group unanimously support the statement that the use of e-cigarettes (also known as vaping) should be included in existing smokefree environments, making them smokefree and vapefree.

Having smokefree environments contributes towards achieving the Smokefree Aotearoa 2025 goal by further denormalising and reducing the uptake of smoking, especially for our young people and helping raise a smokefree generation. This approach applies equally to e-cigarettes (vaping) as we also want to raise a vapefree generation. We know that children do as they see, for many young people the behaviour of vaping looks the same as smoking, and presents the risk of being a gateway to smoking behaviour. As there is currently insufficient evidence of the potential long term health effects of e-cigarettes we want to show leadership in protecting our tamariki and rangatahi from engaging in potentially harmful and addictive practices.

Keeping areas that are currently smokefree to also be vapefree helps manage mixed messages around the definition of smokefree and aligns to expected changes to the Smokefree Environments Act 1990. It also aligns to Hutt Valley District Health Board's "Vaping in smokefree environments" policy which supports vaping as one of the available smoking cessation tools but identifies that smokefree outdoor public places should also be vapefree to protect young people.