Policy on e-cigarette

The “e-cigarette” (electronic cigarette) is a product designed to mimic the appearance and effects of smoking without burning tobacco like a traditional cigarette. The e-cigarette is a battery-powered device that heats a solution of nicotine and propylene glycol producing a nicotine vapor that can be puffed. Various additives such as flavorants can be added to the nicotine solution. In addition to nicotine delivery, the vapor provides a flavor and physical sensation similar to that of tobacco smoke. Both the nicotine solutions and e-cigarettes vary widely from one manufacturer to another with virtually no quality control or standardization. Because there is no combustion of tobacco, e-cigarette manufacturers imply that they are less harmful than traditional cigarettes and allow smokers to “smoke” in places where there are smoke-free indoor air policies or laws.

The e-cigarette is not approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and no scientific studies provide evidence that the e-cigarette is either safe to use or effective in helping smokers to stop smoking. We do not recommend the e-cigarette to our patients as an alternative to smoking or as a method to stop smoking. Instead, we recommend counseling in conjunction with FDA-approved medications which have been proven to be safe and effective in helping people to quit smoking. Specifically we recommend bupropion SR (Zyban), varenicline (Chantix) and approved nicotine replacement therapies: nicotine gum, nicotine inhaler, nicotine lozenge, nicotine nasal spray, and nicotine patch as first line medications to help people quit smoking.. The Mayo Clinic tobacco-free policy does not permit the use of e-cigarettes in Mayo Clinic buildings or on Mayo Clinic premises.