

RISK LADDER FACILITATOR NOTES

There is no single scientifically fixed order. Cards involve different risks, including long-term disease, intoxication, dependence and unknown contents. Use the order below as a discussion guide. Cards do not need to follow a strict internal order.

Highest concern

- Synthetic cannabinoids (Spice)
- Illicit THC vapes
- Tobacco and Cannabis

Very high concern

- Illegal cigarettes
- Legal Cigarettes
- Illegal hand-rolling tobacco
- Hand-rolling tobacco
- Shisha

High concern

- Cannabis edibles
- Cannabis/THC products
- Illegal nicotine vapes
- Heated Tobacco Products (HTP)

Lower concern, but not risk-free

- Legal Vapes
- Nicotine Pouches

Lowest concern within this activity

- Nicotine Replacement Therapy Gum

The order may change depending on the risk being discussed:

- Immediate harm: Spice, THC vapes and cannabis edibles may move higher.
- Long-term harm: Smoked tobacco products belong near the highest end.
- Dependence: Cigarettes, vapes, heated tobacco and pouches contain nicotine.
- Unknown contents: Illegal or unregulated products may move higher.
- Treatment: Licensed NRT gum belongs at the lowest end when used as directed.

Messages to reinforce

- Lower risk does not mean safe. Legal does not mean harmless.
- Burning tobacco causes most smoking-related harm.
- Illegal supply can add uncertainty about contents or strength.
- Legal nicotine vapes are less harmful than smoking, but are not risk-free or intended for young people.
- NRT gum is a regulated stop-smoking treatment.
- One-hour shisha session exposes a person to a volume of smoke equivalent to smoking 100 to 200 cigarettes
- The safest choice for young people is not to use these products.

QUICK FACTS

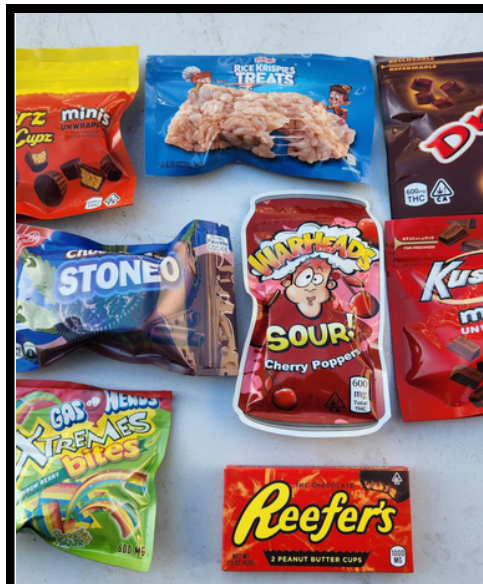
- **Synthetic cannabinoids (Spice):** These substances can be highly potent and unpredictable. Risks include severe anxiety, paranoia, hallucinations, seizures, loss of consciousness and overdose.
- **Illicit THC vapes:** THC vape liquids obtained illegally may have unknown strength or contents. Some products sold as THC vapes have contained synthetic cannabinoids.
- **Cannabis edibles:** Edibles can take time to produce an effect. Someone may take more before the first amount has taken effect, increasing the risk of a harmful reaction.
- **Illegal nicotine vapes:** These may contain more nicotine than permitted, misleading labels or unexpected substances.
- **Tobacco and Cannabis:** This combines exposure to tobacco smoke, nicotine dependence and cannabis-related effects.
- **Illegal cigarettes:** They carry the same serious risks caused by burning tobacco. Illegal supply adds uncertainty about manufacture, contents and compliance.
- **Legal Cigarettes:** Burning tobacco releases toxic chemicals. Smoking is linked to cancer, heart disease, stroke, lung disease and early death.
- **Illegal hand-rolling tobacco:** This carries the harms of smoked tobacco, with added uncertainty linked to illegal supply.
- **Hand-rolling tobacco:** Roll-ups are not safer than manufactured cigarettes. They still involve burning tobacco and inhaling toxic smoke.
- **Shisha:** Tobacco shisha produces harmful smoke and carbon monoxide. Passing smoke through water does not make it harmless.
- **Cannabis/THC products:** These can affect memory, judgement, coordination and mental health. Risk varies greatly by product, strength and method of use.
- **Heated Tobacco Products (HTP):** These heat tobacco rather than burning it. They expose users to nicotine and harmful substances and are not risk-free.
- **Legal Vapes:** Regulated nicotine vapes expose users to fewer harmful substances than smoking. They are not risk-free and are not for children, young people or non-smokers.
- **Nicotine Pouches:** These do not create smoke, but they contain nicotine and can cause dependence. They are not licensed stop-smoking treatments.
- **Nicotine Replacement Therapy Gum:** Licensed NRT provides nicotine without tobacco smoke. When used as directed, it is a proven stop-smoking treatment and carries far less risk than smoking.



**Illegal
nicotine vapes**



Illicit THC vapes



Cannabis edibles



Illegal cigarettes



**Synthetic
cannabinoids (Spice)**



Shisha



**Hand-rolling
tobacco**



Legal Cigarettes



Tobacco and Cannabis



Nicotine Pouches



Cannabis/THC products



Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) gum



Heated Tobacco Products (HTP)



Legal nicotine vapes



Illegal hand-rolling tobacco