

Hello, my name is Melissa Hendrix and I am a former smoker of 22 years that found flavored vapes in 2013. I was a 2 pack of day smoker that had high blood pressure, got headaches often, always felt tired, had a hard time keeping up with the kiddos, and just all around didn't feel good hardly ever. At first, I really didn't think vape would work because I had tried it before 2013 with no success because of the flavor that I had which was tobacco and the type of device I had which is considered a prefilled pod system similar to a Juul. When I had tried the vape for the second time the device was completely different it was an open system and I could put whatever flavor I wanted in it which was a strawberry and cream flavor. Over the course of me vaping I have switched flavors because as I dropped down on my nicotine the flavor taste was different, and I then didn't enjoy that flavor anymore. Flavors have been what has kept me from going back to cigarettes. Honestly, I never really wanted to quit smoking at all but when your children ask you to on a regular basis to quit, you do your best for them.

When I started vaping, I was on a level 2.4% or 24mg of nicotine. Currently today I barely use nicotine because I can adjust how much nicotine I put into my vape using different levels from the e-liquid that I purchase. So, when I purchase e-liquid, I will purchase a flavored e-liquid with zero nicotine and another .3% or 3mg nicotine and add the e-liquid as needed to satisfy my need for nicotine. Some days I will need a little more nicotine while other days I don't need hardly any. I have tried the patches, Wellbutrin, Chantix, and the gum and nothing worked. When I used the patches, I was smoking and using the patches at the highest nic content and surprised I didn't have a heart attack. Chantix well that was a close call I stopped using immediately because it made me very angry and almost hurt my children. Wellbutrin and gum did absolutely nothing for me at all.

The transition from smoking to vaping was interesting. I coughed up so much black stuff within the first month of putting the cigarettes down. I stopped getting sick every time the seasons changed. I could run around and not be winded within the first 30 seconds. The smell and taste of things started to come back. All these were gradual, and it really is amazing to see how far I've come especially when I would always say, "I am going to die a smoker and I will never quit I love it so much." For vapes to change my mind like they have, it is awesome for me and my family.

If a flavor ban is put through with no consideration, a black market will pop up, most if not all vape shops will shut down, employees will have to find other jobs, Maryland will not receive anymore money from the industry, and many will turn back to cigarettes if they don't have an option. The others that will start buying these sorts of products from the black market, will be at the unscrupulous mercy of the illicit manufacturers.