

# Don't let smoking ruin our future

THE rise of e-cigarettes has led to a troubling trend: an increasing number of nonsmokers and minors being drawn to vaping, enticed by their appealing flavours and designs.

The perception of e-cigarettes being a safer alternative has grown due to claims from some quarters that they pose fewer health risks than traditional cigarettes, leading to their gradual acceptance as a substitute. However, the extent to which e-cigarettes are truly less harmful remains unclear at present.

Many individuals experiment with vaping under the assumption that they will not become addicted to it. Unfortunately, just like traditional cigarettes, this often isn't the case, particularly for minors who are susceptible to peer pressure and trends related to e-cigarettes. But perhaps the biggest concern lies in the possibility that this addiction may become entrenched in future generations, leading to an intergenerational threat to everyone's health.

All forms of tobacco products are detrimental to health, leading to preventable diseases such as lung cancer, heart disease, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. These conditions not only harm individual health but also impose significant medical expenses on families and society, burdening our already overstretched healthcare system. It is therefore crucial for the public to remember not to use or consume anything that harms our bodies, even if it is perceived less harmful.

Furthermore, there are significant negative impacts of smoking on our economy. A common argument in favour of the tobacco industry is its purported substantial contribution to our GDP. However, its actual economic impact is minuscule compared with the enormous health-related expenses smoking incurs. These funds could otherwise be allocated towards more critical areas

such as improving education, infrastructure, and social welfare.

Smoking also imposes a significant financial toll on low-income families. It not only affects their well-being but also increases their risk of illness, leading to more time off work and eventually impacting household income. Not to mention the associated medical expenses can hinder their ability to afford essential items and maintain decent living standards.

Both e-cigarettes and traditional cigarettes pose significant threats to health, social well-being, and the economy. A healthy, vibrant, and innovative nation requires a society that refrains from smoking to reduce the impact of non-communicable diseases on the healthcare system.

Therefore, we urge the government, social organisations, and all Malaysians to collaborate in implementing proactive strategies to curb smoking. This includes expanding smoke-free areas,

intensifying educational campaigns and awareness efforts, and raising taxes on tobacco products. It is crucial for us to establish a future smoke-free nation for the benefit of our children.

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**In conjunction with World**  
**No Tobacco Day on May 31**  
**themed 'Protecting Children**  
**from Tobacco Industry**  
**Interference', MyWATCH is**  
**organising the SegarRun run/**  
**walk/cycle event on June 2 at**  
**Dataran Dewan Bandaraya**  
**Kuala Lumpur. For more infor-**  
**mation and to register go to**  
**mywatch.my.**