



147RW
TEXAS
TEXAS AIR NATIONAL GUARD

MARCH 2015

THE TEXAN

147TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

THE TEXAN is a funded Air Force publication that is produced for members of the 147th Reconnaissance Wing at Ellington Field Joint Reserve Base. Contents of The Texan are not necessarily the official views of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, the United States Air Force, the National Guard Bureau, or the Texas Air National Guard. The editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the Public Affairs Office and members of the 147th Reconnaissance Wing.

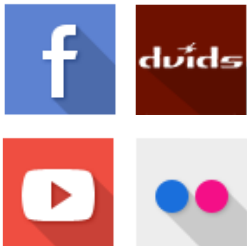
14657 Sneider St.
Ellington Field Joint Reserve Base
Houston, TX 77034
Phone:
281-929-2662
Email:
147RW.Pu.0b21licAffairs@ang.af.mil

www.147rw.ang.af.mil
www.facebook.com/147RW

- Commander**
Colonel Terence Winkler
- Vice Commander**
Colonel Stan Jones
- Executive Officer**
Lt. Colonel Shaunte Cooper
- Public Affairs Officers**
Captain Fredy Reyes
1st Lieutenant Alicia Lacy
- Public Affairs Manager**
Master Sergeant Sean Cowher
- Journalists**
Staff Sergeant Mindy Bloem
Senior Airman Susanna Coronel
Senior Airman Chasity Lollis



- 03** *147th Maintenance Group keep aircraft flying for joint exercise*
- 05** *Celebrate Women's History Month*
- 06** *Wing Member recognized with national award*
- 07** *Chief's Corner: Empowerment*



Visit the 147th Reconnaissance Wing social media sites to stay current with what is happening at the Wing.

The icons to the left are interactive and will take you directly to the social media site of your choice.



08 Warrior Day 2015

09 Human Trafficking Victim Assistance Program

11 First Sergeant's Comments: Leadership

13 Health and Wellness: E-Cigarettes

COVER:

Airman 1st Class Samuel Roberts a crew chief assigned to the 147th Reconnaissance Wing Maintenance Group prepares to park an MQ-1B Predator at Fort Polk Army Airfield, La. The 147th flies the Predator at Fort Polk in support of Green Flag East, a joint training mission with the Army. National Guard photo by 1st Lt. Alicia Lacy

147th MXG supports wing pilots and Army units in Green Flag-East exercise

Story and Photos by 1st Lt. Alicia Lacy
147th Reconnaissance Wing Public Affairs

FORT POLK, Louisiana – Keeping an aircraft airborne takes the concerted efforts of multiple individuals, including the maintainers who work on them day after day.

As part of a two-week-long Green Flag-East exercise that is held throughout the year, maintainers from the 147th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, 147th

mission ready for the pilots, while remaining proficient in their key tasks.

“We try to give these kids experience on doing what we do and there’s a lot of repetition in the work we do, but it’s something you need to master so that we can keep these aircraft flying and we can give the support to the Army,” said Mas-



Maintenance Group, 147th Reconnaissance Wing, at Ellington Field in Houston, played a vital role in ensuring the MQ-1B Predators were functioning properly and able support the joint Army-Air exercise.

Valuable training

With millions of dollars of equipment in their care, maintenance airmen train at the wing and during exercises like Green Flag to ensure fully-functioning aircraft are

ter Sgt. Clayton P. Lemons, MQ-1B crew chief with the wing.

However, due to the unique nature of the Texas Guard base not physically launching the reconnaissance aircraft out of Ellington, maintainers are not able to work on airborne Predators at the wing, so opportunities to train at the Launch and Recovery Element in Louisiana prove to be beneficial.

“It’s important for us (to come out here) as crew chiefs because we get

experience we don’t get at Ellington,” Lemons said, about the training opportunities at Fort Polk.

As opposed to the trainer MQ-1s maintainers work on at Ellington, training on a functional and flying aircraft requires additional maintenance to keep aircraft fully mission capable, Lemons added.

Attention to detail and being thorough in each task are critical to the job, which requires hands-on training to ensure airmen fully



"They have to utilize air support to do their mission, and if we can provide them with that and it helps keep an Army soldier from dying from the bad guys, I'm on board with that."



understand how to execute their duties.

"Anyone can read tech data, but it's if you fully understand it and are able to exercise it for when you go downrange or respond to a hurricane or natural disaster," said Senior Airman Stephen Angelle, an MQ-1B crew chief with the wing.

"I didn't know that it took this many people to keep an airframe flying," Angelle added. "Because as a kid, you look at the airplanes and you never think about how they stay flying. You just think of the guys flying them. You forget about the maintainers and I think it's very important not to forget about the people who maintain the aircraft and keep it going."

Green Flag-East

Green Flag-East is a joint exercise held at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk up to 10 times each year, with Army brigades training in combat scenarios designed to provide realistic combat operations in a controlled environment.

The Air Force's role in the exercise is to provide close air, intelligence and surveillance support, often working in concert with Air Force joint terminal attack controllers to put bombs on target and protect ground forces.

Because overseas contingency operations involve two

MXG continued on page 7

WOMEN MAKING HISTORY

Weaving the Stories of Women's Lives

By Tech. Sgt. Adrienne Russell-George
147th Equal Opportunity Office

March is National Women's History Month. Each year, the National Women's History Project selects a unifying theme to be shared by all who promote women's history. This year's theme "Weaving the Stories of Women's Lives," presents the opportunity to intertwine different women's stories into the fabric of our nation's history. Highlighting the lives of individual women is vitally important because it allows us the chance to reveal exceptional role models who share a more extensive vision of what women have done to benefit society. The stories of women's lives encourages girls and young women to aim for bigger and bolder than they may have thought possible for themselves. These stories also give boys and men a better understanding of the female experience. Remembering the stories of women of the past, their sacrifices and commitments can inspire all and pave a way to the future.

National Women's History month stems back to 1857, when women from factories in New York City staged a protest over working conditions. However, it wasn't until 1981 that Congress established National Women's History week, which was then expanded to Women's History Month in 1987. Several activists and scholars have helped shape the Women's History Movement. Each year, a list of Honorees is emphasized by the Women's History Project.

The 2015 Honorees are: Delilah L. Beasley, Historian and Newspaper Columnist (1867-1934), Gladys Tantaquid-geon, Mohegan Medicine Woman, Anthropologist, and Tribal Leader (1899-2005), Eleanor Flexner, Historian and Independent Scholar (1908-1995), Polly Weltz Kaufman, Writer, Teacher, Activist, (1929-Present), Lynn Sherr, Broadcast Journalist and Author, (1943-Present), Judy Yung, Oral Historian, Author, and Professor, (1946-Present), Darlene Clark Hine, Historian and Educator, (1947-Present), Holly Near, Singer, Songwriter, Social Activist, (1949-Present), and Vicki L. Ruiz, Educator and Pioneer in Latina History, (1955-Present).

This year's Honorees have written, coauthored, or edited more than 60 books. Their combined creations reveal a tremendous breadth of the multicultural female experience; they embody the concept of weaving women's stories into the fabric of our history.



SHE SERVED

SO THAT WE COULD LIVE FREE

Salute National Women's History Month

Wing member recognized as top in his field

Once a year the premier Cyber Warriors across the United States Air Force and the Air National Guard are awarded the General John P. Jumper Award for Excellence in Warfighting Integration and the Air Force Information Dominance Award. This year one of our very own, Staff Sergeant Mike Jones of the 147 OSS won for the Excellence in Warfighting Integration Enlisted category.

Sergeant Jones is a fulltime technician working in the Remotely Piloted Aircraft Squadron, Operations Center Communications (RPA-SOC) shop. He is a member of a select few Cyber Warriors throughout the Air National Guard that serve in this capacity and along with the rest of the team here, he is responsible for providing 24x7 combat support in various theaters.

Over the last year, Sergeant Jones ran RPA cyber support for well over 700 sorties, which provided real time Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance support to our troops on the ground. Not only is he an integral member of this highly specialized shop, he is also a trainer for the Traditional Guardsmen assigned to him and he is an adjunct professor for San Jacinto University.

This is a proud moment for the 147th Reconnaissance Wing and serves as a great example of our relevance by providing critical support for real world combat operations around the globe. We continue to be leaders within the Air National Guard and throughout our local community as well. This is one of the qualities that makes your membership here so unique, regardless of where you are serving throughout the Wing, you have a share in the successes and therefor have much to be proud of.



Photo by Master Sgt Sean Cowher

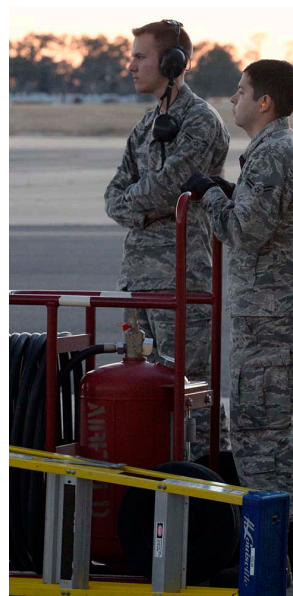


MXG continued from page 5

or more service branches working together, Army and Air members training how they fight enables participants an opportunity to experience a higher operations tempo in a high-stress environment.

For the maintainers, their role is to keep the aircraft mission capable to be able to support the Army.

"I think that us working with the Army is important," Lemons said. "They have to utilize air support to do their mission, and if we can provide them with that and it helps keep an Army soldier from dying from the bad guys, I'm on board with that."





CHIEF'S CORNER

EMPOWERMENT

BY CHIEF MASTER SGT. ALAN CARVAJAL

Don't be afraid to Relinquish Control and Give Good Feedback: Ugly Baby!

Communicate clearly to your team that you are not there to control every decision and activity and that you expect them to use their own judgment in solving problems and making decisions. Give guidance and feedback when needed. This Feedback should not just happen when they are in trouble. Many Managers feel that they don't want to call the baby ugly just because someone won't like them after that. You have not been placed in Leadership role to make friends; you have been entrusted with the expectation of getting the Mission Completed. It's great when you can make friends along the way but that's not the "Mission". It is your job as a Leader and Manager to set the expectation and monitor progress that enhances the Goal of "Mission-Accomplishment". You must comprehend the concepts of Behavioral Science as it relates to motivating and treating people in an individual and personal-manner that encourages them to get the Mission done because "they" want to get it done. There are many workers that just want you to guide and support them. They also are not here just to make friends, they want to complete the Mission and sometimes Managers don't give them the support and direction/goals they need to accomplish the job in an efficient manner.

It is important that you act as a Guide and Advisor along the way encourage your subordinate Managers to bring you issues they are struggling with so that you can talk to them about "their ideas" and suggestions for final solution. Encourage them to be courageous when making decisions with their work groups and assure them that you will support their efforts. Make sure they understand that you expect they may and probably will make mistakes along the way. Set the expectation that they should try hard to not make the same mistakes over-and-over.... again.

Work as a Profit Center not as a Cost Center: Bowling in the Dark!

This is a concept that many personnel in large-organizations struggle with. It is extremely important that you set goals for your work area. By telling your Management Team and workplace to "Just Do Better" without establishing consistent and obtainable goals is frustrating to those who want to establish a good performance record. This "Do Better" approach is an encouragement to those who don't want to be held accountable and just want to collect a paycheck.

I constantly used the analogy of "Bowling in the Dark" with Leadership/Management teams I work with. The analogy goes like this: When bowling in the Dark, a person throws the bowling-ball down the alley and the ball rolls out of site. Then you hear the ball crash into the pins and drop but you don't see what your score is because you can't see how many pins dropped. You truly can't see how affective you are because the pins (or your goal) are in the dark and you can't see how affective the approach and result of your technique/process is. Your success is vague when you don't establish measurable, track-able and obtainable goals. Obviously, there will be times when an effect or measurement to a technique or process is difficult to measure. After all; how can you measure Freedom? But.... whenever possible; measure and track your goals or you will be "Bowling in the Dark". As a work-area Manager and Leader, you must work with Senior Leadership and your subordinate leadership team to attempt-setting consistent, obtainable and measureable-goals, which can be tracked and discussed periodically.

Most people understand that some work areas like the Military, are Cost-Centers with abstract Goals and uncertain outcomes to major operations even years after the expenditures of Resources and more importantly Personnel. Measuring Freedom is hard to do unless you have lived without it. Measuring your expenditures and attempting to be as efficient and effective as you can by tracking obtainable goals is the only way that we as Managers of Resources and Leaders of People can avoid the error of working as a Cost Center and not a Profit Center. For those who are still skeptical of these concepts I would ask you this question; Do you think that non-profit organizations like Hospitals don't make a profit? If you do, then Google it; they make millions every year. That is because they run their organizations like Profit-Center not like Cost-Centers just because they receive donations and tax-breaks.

You also must understand the concept of efficient and effective Resource Management and not just spend and or expend just because it is there and if we don't use it we will lose. Use it, but use it efficiently and effectively. These concepts can be learned when you take the time to invest in Business Management and Business Administration Science Study. I know this concept is sometimes hard to understand because our natural paradigm is to assume that because you were great at "whatever career-field" you promoted through, that automatically translates into a circumstance where you will be a great Manager of Resources and Leader of the Organization. This sometimes happens, but very often it does not. You must invest in Business Management and or Business Administration training to be a more effective and efficient Manager of Resources and Leader of People.

147TH WARRIOR DAY

MAY 2015

Warrior Day is on and your squadron is in the spotlight. Start talking and forming your game plan to become the “fittest squadron” in the Wing. So you ask, “how do I compete with the ASOS guys?” “They are “bad @\$\$es”, you think. But fitness is more than brute strength; it is a measure of physical and mental strength that not only incorporates personal strength, but more importantly, the skill to work as a team to achieve the greater goal.

EVENTS

**TOP 1.5 MILE, TOP SIT-UPS, TOP PUSH-UPS
FITNESS CHALLENGE
SOCCER
FLAG FOOTBALL
GOLF (CLOSEST TO THE PIN)
HORSESHOES**

**TUG-OF-WAR
SPADES TOURNEY
3-ON-3 BASKETBALL
VOLLEYBALL
KICKBALL TOURNEY
DOMINOS**

SCORING

For team sports - teams can make up from different areas of the Wing. However, that team must declare what squadron they are representing.

Scoring is simple:

- Each event will have its own scoring criteria.
- Each member and/or team will declare what squadron they represent when checking into the event.
- Each event's top three finishers will be recorded.
- The top three places for all the events will be tallied to determine the overall Warrior Day winner. The more events a squadron enters and places in the top three, the better odds of becoming the “fittest squadron” in the Wing.

SIGN UP

See your squadron rep for signing up for specific events, this is for individual and team events; they in turn will coordinate with the Event POCs. If your Squadron does not have a rep, piggy back on a squadron within your Group. Squadron reps are as follows:

**SFS
CES
MDG
OG
Comm Flt
LRS
FSS
ASOS
MXG**

**SrA Valerie Roberts
TSgt Dunham, Cole
TSgt Courtney Bosch
MSgt Dion Folley
MSgt Jackie Howard
MSgt Jeremie Coleman
MSgt Ward
TSgt Tyisha McNutt
SrA Bradley Smith**





Can you see them?

It's time to open our eyes. Victims of the sex trade, domestic servitude and forced labor have been invisible, until now.

Victim Assistance Program Working to Meet Humanitarian Needs

by Sharon Peyus

Unit Chief, Investigative Support Unit, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Homeland Security Investigations

A 15 year-old, branded with her pimp's street name tattooed across her chest, was ordered to engage in sex acts for money with dozens of male clients. Each day, the teenager and three other adult women had to meet a quota set by their trafficker. The teenager was required to work more than 12 hours a day with only one daily meal, and if she resisted, she was beaten.

Regrettably, this real-life story is not uncommon scenario U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) has witnessed. ICE HSI is a critical investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security that combats criminal organizations and criminal exploitation, including domestic and international cases of human trafficking. ICE utilizes a victim-centered approach to combating human trafficking, which places equal value on the identification and stabilization of victims, and the investigation and prosecution of traffickers. Victims are key to the successful investigation and prosecution of traffickers. Because victims may be fearful of law enforcement or reprisal from their traffickers, it is paramount to ensure that victims feel safe and secure, and are able to access the social services they require for stability, safety, and recovery.

ICE's Victim Assistance Program is supported by Victim Assistance Specialists across the country who provide victims with a wide range of local resources from early in the investigative stage through prosecution. Working together with hundreds of collateral duty Victim Assistance Coordinators, the Victim Assistance Program connects victims of human trafficking and other crimes with nongovernmental organizations in order to meet the victims' basic humanitarian needs. Providing a channel for victims to fully disclose their stories in a non-threatening environment is vital to our victim-centered process.

Everyone has a role to play in combating human trafficking. DHS and ICE rely on individuals, families, and communities to learn the indicators of human trafficking and how to report human trafficking once suspected or identified. Knowing the red flags is a key step in identifying more victims, so they can be rescued and have their traffickers brought to justice.

The ICE HSI Task Force, which includes local law enforcement, identified this teenager as a victim of human trafficking. ICE HSI's Victim Assistance Specialist then assessed her needs, and the needs of the additional victims who were subsequently identified. Victim assistance efforts were provided throughout the criminal investigation – including referring this teenager to a tattoo artist and arranging an appointment to remove her tattoo. The teenager was kept apprised of the judicial process, and provided ongoing care and case management without interruption.

Last month, her trafficker was sentenced to 10 years in federal prison followed by 20 years of supervised release. Upon release, the trafficker is also required to register as a sex offender. This teenager is now reunited with her family and enrolled in school – offering hope that she will not turn back, but become a survivor instead.

If you suspect something, do not at any time attempt to confront a trafficker directly or alert a victim to your suspicions. Instead, contact local law enforcement directly or call 1-866-DHS-2-ICE (1-866-347- 2423) to report suspicious criminal activity. This Tip Line is also accessible outside of the United States by calling 802-872-6199. To get help from the National Human Trafficking Resource Center, call 1-888- 373-7888 or text HELP or INFO to BeFree (233733).

How do I Identify Human Trafficking?

Human trafficking is often “hidden in plain sight.” There are a number of red flags, or indicators, which can help alert you to human trafficking. Recognizing the signs is the first step in identifying victims.

Some Indicators Concerning a Potential Victim Include:

Behavior or Physical State:

- Does the victim act fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense or nervous/paranoid?
- Does the victim defer to another person to speak for him or her?
- Does the victim show signs of physical and/or sexual abuse, physical restraint, confinement or torture?
- Has the victim been harmed or deprived of food, water, sleep, medical care or other life necessities?
- Does the victim have few or no personal possessions?

Social Behavior:

- Can the victim freely contact friends or family?
- Is the victim allowed to socialize or attend religious services?
- Does the victim have freedom of movement?
- Has the victim or family been threatened with harm if the victim attempts to escape?

Work Conditions and Immigration Status:

- Does the victim work excessively long and/or unusual hours?
- Is the victim a juvenile engaged in commercial sex?
- Was the victim recruited for one purpose and forced to engage in some other job?
- Is the victim's salary being garnished to pay off a smuggling fee? (Paying off a smuggling fee alone is not considered trafficking.)
- Has the victim been forced to perform sexual acts?
- Has the victim been threatened with deportation or law enforcement action? Is the victim in possession of identification and travel documents; if not, who has control of the documents?

Minor Victims:

- Is the victim a juvenile engaged in commercial sex?

For more information, please visit:

www.dhs.gov/bluecampaign



1st. SERGEANT'S COMMENTS

WHAT IS A LEADER?

by MSgt John Randall
147th Civil Engineering Squadron First Sergeant

I was sitting before a promotion board trying to get my diamond. As anyone knows who has sat on those boards it is intimidating. Nonetheless I felt that all was going pretty well. They asked me questions and I was able to give reasonable answers. One thing you do not want to do is say something really dumb and blow your opportunity. The Command Chief then asked me what my idea of good leadership was. I hesitated and turned inward to think about that for a second. 20 years ago I would have answered that question differently. I thought then that leadership was Taking Command!! Being Assertive!! And Directing Orders from a lofted position!! I thought leadership was a whole lot more about what you said not what you did. I came back from my internal dialogue and answered the Chief's question.

I see effective leadership now as a position of support from the back, guiding and directing. I imagine it

as calmness. I think it's more about what you do, not necessarily what you say. I guess I should say it's about consistency between what you do and what you say. Leadership is like a shepherd. Shepherds rise early in the morning to check on their fields and their flocks. They want to ensure that the sheep have not been harmed during the night and that the fields are sufficient for grazing. If one of their sheep is straying the shepherd pulls them back. It is a leadership based on self-sacrifice and service. A good leader takes a little more than their share of the blame, a little less than their share of the credit. Effective leadership means serving others.

I stood before a high school class recently, who were making career decisions, I said in the grand scheme money will mean nothing, popularity will fade, the body will break down, but the one thing that matters is how you served others. Is your wife at peace? Does your

daughter know she can call Dad anytime for anything? Are you serving in a church somewhere? A member of a volunteer fire department? This is the stuff that will matter after you are gone.

My pastor once said your kids should look over your casket and say, "That was the greatest man that ever lived". Nelson Mandela said, "It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things occur. You take the front line when there is danger.

I have heard it said that I don't talk enough. I have deliberately taught myself to shut-up and listen, to observe. To me leadership is best when people barely know you exist, when their work is done, their aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves. So the last thing I said that day in the promotion board was, I have learned from 50 years of living that it isn't about you.

Operational Security

Your Television may be listening

From Samsung, "Please be aware that if your spoken words include personal or other sensitive information, that information will be among the data captured and transmitted to a third party through your use of Voice Recognition". Regardless of the technical details, this producer has officially warned you about certain models of their smart TV...and admitted that a 3rd party is involved. They are covering their legal tracks. There aren't further usage details from that 3rd party either. What more does a TV need to do turn you off? Recently - TVs and game systems - had cameras come on when they are supposedly off. There are social networking services and businesses testing the automatic identification of you via facial-features. And while advertisers could only guess before how much their ads/shows are viewed, this data is now specific and precise. And some personnel shop via the net thru their TV, check emails etc.

Airman & Family READINESS PROGRAM

147TH RECONNAISSANCE WING - ELLINGTON FIELD JRB - HOUSTON, TEXAS



Monalisa Norton

Airman and Family Readiness Program Manager

Office: 281-929-2056

BB/Cell: 281-740-9373

147rw.frg@ang.af.mil

Kendra Gladwill

Key Volunteer Program Manager

Office: 281-929-2055

147rw.frg@ang.af.mil

Commanders Hotline Ideas | Comments | Suggestions

929-2000



AMERICAN AIRMEN | SPIRITUAL WINGMEN



147 RECONNAISSANCE WING
CHAPLAIN CORPS



DUTY HOURS: 281-929-2636

NON-DUTY HOURS: 281-929-2716

147RW.CHAPLAIN@ANG.AF.MIL

Safety Shorts



SPRING BREAK SAFETY

- Never get in a car with someone you suspect is intoxicated. There is always a safer alternative.
- All genuine taxis will have some sort of ID or badge. You can check for this before accepting a ride.
- Never leave valuables in plain view in your car. Lock items in your trunk before reaching your destination.
- Take a map on road trips. These days everyone relies on their phones for navigation, but in some places where service isn't strong, you can lose that ability.
- When you approach the ATM, do a full 360 degree scan, looking completely around you to see if anyone is hanging out where they shouldn't be. If someone is creeping you out, go to another ATM. Situational awareness is key.
- Do not drink from open beverage sources like punch bowls, pitchers, or tubs.
- Come with your friends. Leave with your friends. We need to look out for each other and if you see someone not in your group in a potentially bad situation, look out for them too.
- Decide before you go out what your limits should be.
- Party smart.
- Be responsible.

What's for lunch?

7 March 2015

Chicken / Steak Fajitas
Beans
Rice
Salad Bar

8 March 2015

Chicken and Waffles
Pancakes
Country Fried Steak
Ham & Cheese Scramble Egg
Fried Potatoes
Green Beans
Corn

E-Cigarettes 101

By R. Morgan Griffin
WebMD Feature

Electronic cigarettes: Are they safer than tobacco? Or are they a high-tech way to hook a new generation on a bad nicotine habit?

Nobody knows yet.

Research into the effects of e-cigarettes lags behind their popularity. But ready or not, the era of e-cigarettes is here. It's a booming, billion-dollar industry -- on track to outsell tobacco products within a decade. The number of teens and tweens using these products doubled between 2011 and 2012.

The time to get informed about these products is now.

How E-Cigarettes Work

They look like the real thing. The end glows as you inhale. As you exhale, you puff out a cloud of what looks like smoke. It's vapor, similar to the fog you might see at rock shows, says M. Brad Drummond, MD. He's an assistant professor of medicine at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

All e-cigarettes work basically the same way. Inside, there's a battery, a heating element, and a cartridge that holds nicotine and other liquids and flavorings. Features and costs vary. Some are disposable. Others have a rechargeable battery and refillable cartridges.

Using an e-cigarette is called "vaping."

Are They Safe?

The nicotine inside the cartridges is addictive. When you stop using it, you can get withdrawal symptoms including feeling irritable, depressed, restless and anxious. It can be dangerous for people with heart problems. It may also harm your arteries over time.

So far, evidence suggests that e-cigarettes may be safer than regular cigarettes. The biggest danger from tobacco is the smoke, and e-cigarettes don't burn. Tests show the levels of dangerous chemicals they give off are a fraction of what you'd get from a real cigarette. But what's in them can vary.

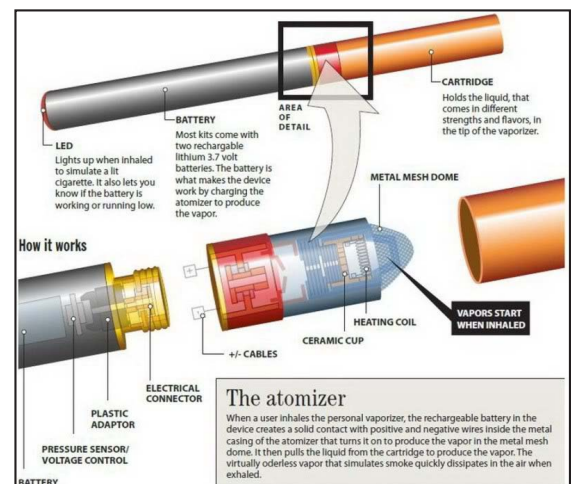
"E-cigarettes may be less harmful than cigarettes," Drummond says. "But we still don't know enough about their long-term risks or the effects of secondhand exposure."

Pro and Con

E-cigarettes have triggered a fierce debate among health experts who share the same goal -- reducing the disease and death caused by tobacco. But they disagree about whether e-cigarettes make the problem better or worse.

Opponents say that because nicotine is addictive, e-cigarettes could be a "gateway drug," leading nonsmokers and kids to use tobacco. They also worry that manufacturers -- with huge advertising budgets and celebrity endorsements -- could make smoking popular again. That would roll back decades of progress in getting people to quit or never start smoking.

Others look at possible benefits for smokers. "Obviously, it would be best if smokers could quit completely," says Michael Siegel, MD, MPH, a professor at Boston University's School of Public Health. "But if that's not possible, I think they'd be a lot better off with e-cigarettes. They're a safer alternative."



Siegel compares replacing tobacco with e-cigarettes to heroin users switching to the painkiller methadone. The replacement may have its own risks, but it's safer.

Some supporters believe that e-cigarettes could help people quit, just like nicotine gum. Initial research looks promising, but more long term, in-depth studies are needed.

What Parents Should Know

Nicotine can affect brain development in children and teens, Drummond says.

Some e-cigarettes have candy flavoring, which could make them appealing to kids.

They don't leave a smell like tobacco. So it's harder for parents to know if their kids are vaping.

What Adults and Smokers Need to Know

If you don't smoke, don't start vaping. There are no health benefits and some risks.

If you smoke and are trying to quit, you're better off with an FDA-approved method of quitting, Drummond says, like the nicotine patch or gum. There's good evidence that they help. E-cigarettes may turn out to be an effective way to quit, but we don't have the proof yet.

If you're not planning to quit, would it be healthier to switch from tobacco products to e-cigarettes? Maybe. Talk to your doctor about the risks and benefits.

While experts debate, some cities -- like Boston, Los Angeles, and New York -- have passed laws about how people can buy or use e-cigarettes in public.

Bigger, changes are likely.

The FDA has proposed new regulations that would extend the agency's authority over many tobacco products, including e-cigarettes.

A minimum age requirement is among the proposed regulations.

