

Walmart to stop selling electronic cigarettes at its stores

20 September 2019, by Anne D'innocenzio



In this Sept. 3, 2019 file photo, a Walmart logo is displayed outside of a Walmart store, in Walpole, Mass. Walmart says it will stop selling electronic cigarettes at its namesake stores and Sam's Clubs following a string of illnesses and deaths related to vaping. The nation's largest retailer said Friday, Sept. 20 that it will complete its exit from e-cigarettes after selling through current inventory. It cited growing federal, state and local regulatory complexity regarding vaping products. (AP Photo/Steven Senne, File)

Walmart said Friday that it will stop selling electronic cigarettes at its namesake stores and Sam's Clubs in the wake of a string of several hundred mysterious illnesses and eight vaping-related deaths.

The nation's largest retailer said move is due to "growing federal, state and local regulatory complexity" regarding vaping products. It will complete its exit from e-cigarettes after selling through its current inventory, the company said in a statement.

Walmart's decision is the latest blow to the vaping industry, which has tried to position its products as healthier alternatives to [smoking cigarettes](#), which are responsible for 480,000 deaths a year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention.

But the industry has come under increased scrutiny after the deaths and illnesses—along with a surge in underage vaping.

President Donald Trump has proposed a federal ban on flavored e-cigarettes and vaping products. Michigan banned the sale of flavored e-cigarettes this week. In June, San Francisco became the first major U.S. city to ban the sale of [electronic cigarettes](#).

E-cigarettes represent a very small part of Walmart's nicotine business, which also includes traditional cigarettes, [smokeless tobacco](#) and nicotine gum.



In this Aug. 28, 2019, file photo, a man exhales while smoking an e-cigarette in Portland, Maine. Walmart says it will stop selling electronic cigarettes at its namesake stores and Sam's Clubs following a string of illnesses and deaths related to vaping. The nation's largest retailer said Friday, Sept. 20 that it will complete its exit from e-cigarettes after selling through current inventory. It cited growing federal, state and local regulatory complexity regarding vaping products. (AP Photo/Robert F. Bukaty, File)

The Vapor Technology Association, a trade group, was quick to slam Walmart's move against vaping products while keeping cigarettes on its shelves.

"The fact that Walmart is reducing access for adult smokers to regulated vapor products while continuing to sell combustible cigarettes is irresponsible," Tony Abboud, executive director of the association, said in a statement. "This will drive former adult smokers to purchase more cigarettes."

More than 500 people have been diagnosed with breathing illnesses after using e-cigarettes and other vaping devices, according to U.S. health officials. An eighth death was reported this week. But health officials still have not identified the cause.

In July, Walmart, which is based in Bentonville, Arkansas, raised the minimum age to purchase tobacco products, including all e-cigarettes, to 21. It also said then that it was in the process of discontinuing the sale of fruit- and dessert-flavored electronic nicotine delivery systems.

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APA citation: Walmart to stop selling electronic cigarettes at its stores (2019, September 20) retrieved 17 June 2021 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-09-walmart-electronic-cigarettes.html>

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