

SPECIAL INVESTIGATION

BY LARISSA NOLAN

A CANCER specialist slammed the tobacco industry for targeting kids with vapes, claiming: "They are recruiting children".

Oncologist John Crown – one of Ireland's leading doctors – backed the Irish Mirror's campaign for an urgent ban on the sale of the devices to under-18s.

Our special investigation revealed how a 14-year-old boy bought handfuls of disposable vapes in an hour, because there is no age requirement.

Professor Crown – who introduced the law banning smoking in cars with kids – said: "The tobacco industry's model is they need to recruit children to their product."

"Their customers die out due to smoking, so they need new ones."

"Four-fifths of those who smoke started under the age of 18. Vaping is a way of giving highly addictive nicotine, without the smoke."

"They're encouraging a new generation to become nicotine addicts. After a while, many graduate to cigarettes, or switch between [the two]."

"The business model of the tobacco industry can be summed up as, 'Addict kids to carcinogens'."

"An age limit needs to be immediately introduced – nobody under 18 should be able to buy them."

"It needs to be legislated to within an inch of its life. The authorities should come down like a ton of bricks on anyone found selling nicotine to children."

The Public Health (Nicotine Inhaling Products) Bill 2023 to ban their sale to teens should be introduced in the new year.

Prof Crown said vaping is a better choice for adults who are already established smokers.

He added: "For those having real trouble giving up cigarettes, it can be useful as a tobacco replacement."

LEGISLATION

"In my ideal world, it would be under medical supervision and authorised and dispensed like a medicinal product."

"Vaping compared to smoking is less harmful. But vaping is bad for you – nicotine is bad for you."

"The only acceptable role of vaping is to get nicotine addicts off cigarettes."

Paediatric respiratory consultant Des Cox said: "The legislation they are bringing in is not enough. A study from 2019 found four in 10 teens had tried it and a lot has happened in this industry since then."

"There's been a doubling in the usage of vapes since disposables became widely available and 85% of those who vape use these pens."

"These products are marketed to kids, as a recreational product, on social media. We have generation of young people hooked on nicotine because of their tactics."

"It's not a good idea for young people with developing lungs and brains to be exposed to inhaled nicotine. You see children with poor

The tobacco industry's customers die so they need new ones.. they need to recruit children

Cancer specialist says ban vapes for kids under 18



ADDICTED
Young brains are more likely to get hooked on nicotine



ACCESSIBLE
Kids can buy vapes as easily as sweets

concentration, not sleeping at night as they're addicted to vapes."

"We're not seeing large volumes of kids coming into the emergency department with vaping issues, but we are seeing them."

"An acute effect can be coughing and wheezing and asthma attacks. We'd be more worried about the damage it is doing to the lungs in the

long term. You are more likely to develop COPD later in life if you chronically vape early in life. It will cause conditions for the developing lungs."

Dr Cox is part of the RCPI's Faculty of Paediatrics group calling for a ban on disposables, the adolescent product of choice.

They say kids are using disposables in "alarming numbers", which they describe as "worryingly high" and "a major public health concern."

They want a ban on single-use vapes, strict legislation on advertising and promotion, and a ban on flavours and colours designed to attract kids.

Professor Emmet O'Brien, consultant respiratory physician and

chair of anti-smoking group ASH, said: "You're hearing of 90% usage among teens in certain demographics."

"Smoking used to be in the high 40s as a percentage of population at the height of it and in recent years we were getting it down towards single digits."

"We've gone backwards. Now a whole new generation are addicted to nicotine."

"With vapes you can inhale deeply and more frequently than combustibles."

"Some of these disposables have roughly the same nicotine as 40 fags. Children couldn't go through



Our teens are at risk

OUR special investigation found:

- Teens can buy vapes in corner shops, phone stores and vape shops as easily as lollipops.
- Seven teens were hospitalised this year due to vapes – with one treated for anti-freeze poisoning.
- Nicotine is one of the most addictive substances known and experts say the teenage brain is more susceptible to addiction.
- Inhaling nicotine has detrimental effects on the developing brain and lungs.

Tánaiste Micheal Martin – who led the war on smoking – said he was "appalled" at kids being able to buy vapes.

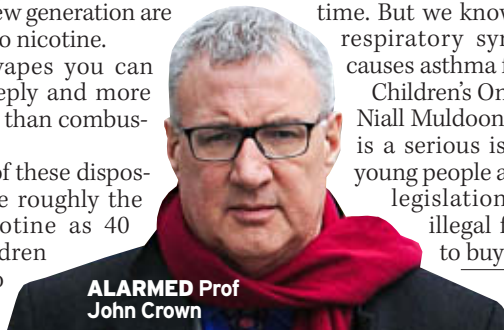
Health Minister Stephen Donnelly is heading the Bill to ban their sale to kids.

He announced last week new legislation is in place to also ban disposables completely.

two packs a day, but they can and do go through a disposable vape in a day.

"We don't know the effects of these things and we won't for some time. But we know it increases respiratory symptoms and causes asthma flares."

Children's Ombudsman Dr Niall Muldoon said: "Vaping is a serious issue affecting young people and I welcome legislation to make it illegal for under-18s to buy vapes."



ALARMED Prof John Crown