**Parents' horror as new $35 device lets you INHALE alcohol goes on sale in U.S.**

Source: Daily Mail

By James Nye

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Parents have been warned of the dangers of a simple new device freely available online which heats alcohol and allows it to be inhaled - reportedly giving the user an instant but intense high.

Released in December, the $35 Vaportini acts in a manner similar to a traditional vaporizer, heating and releasing intoxicating vapors which are breathed through a straw after being heated by a candle to 140 Fahreneheit.

Bypassing the digestive system, the Vaportini causes alcohol to be ingested directly to the bloodstream through the lungs, potentially causing dangerous levels of intoxication - especially if abused.

The Vaportini is available to buy all across the United States and is legal according to its creators.

'It is ill advised for experimentation among those under 21,' said Dr. Thomas Greenfield, Center Director at the National Alcohol Research Center in Emeryville, California.

'There could be inexperienced people at parties under peer pressure who may find themselves using this method of alcohol consumption.

'It might not be possible to self-regulate their consumption and teenagers just like adults can be drunk drivers too.'

Indicating that in research laboratory's rats have been known to be more perceptible to alcohol addiction through inhalation, Dr. Greenfield warned of the dangers of this particular method of consumption.

'To my knowledge there have been no human studies on the effects inhaling alcohol,' said Dr. Greenfield.

'Certainly in lab rats they have experimented with vapor chambers and the animals experimented upon have high levels of intoxication and addiction.'

The Vaportini was created by Julie Palmer back in 2009, but it went on sale on her website for $34.50 each in December.

As with any excessive use of alcohol, Greenfield said that teens especially risked harming their own mental development with abuse.

'In early adolescence, the brain is not as formed and too much alcohol risks affecting its formation,' explained Dr. Greenfield.'

The device which its creators say is legal, bares striking similarities to the notorious Alcohol without Liquid device (AWOL) which mechanically vaporizes alcohol shots over the course of 20 minutes and is banned in 22 states.

Invented by Chicago resident Julie Palmer in 2009, the simple glass and metal device is offered as a novelty method to consume drinks at the bar she owns in the Windy City, Red Kiva.

The Vaportini works differently to the more traditional consumption of alcohol.

Normally, when a drink is taken, alcohol is absorbed 10 percent through the stomach and 85 percent in the small intestine.

The presence of food slows this process further, but when alcohol is inhaled, however, alcohol enters the lungs and goes directly into the bloodstream, causing a much more rapid and stronger buzz.

However, unlike the AWOL device which retails online in the U.S. for around $250, the Vaportini does not promise zero side effects and explicitly tells users that 'alcohol consumed through a Vaportini will be detected by a blood alcohol test.

Over 20 states banned the AWOL device, which was first introduced into the United States in 2004/5, amid much concern and controversy.

The glass globe of the Vaportini is filled with a shot of liquor and put on top of a pint glass.

The heat from a tea-light candle in the bottom of the pint glass turns the alcohol gaseous inside the globe.

One reviewer from Time Out Chicago said: 'I stick the straw through a small hole in the globe and suck in a drag of invisible Knob Creek bourbon fumes. It's warm, retains its flavor and gives an instant, though brief, buzz.'

Palmer herself says: 'The intention is not to replace drinking.'

However, she says, 'If the Vaportini doesn't take off, we should market it to stoners as the Vodka Bong.'

'When you inhale alcohol right into the lung tissue, that gets drawn right into the blood supply immediately, so it's a very rapid onset of the intoxicating effect, and so has obviously very high abuse potential,' said Robert Walker of the University of Kentucky Center on Drugs and Alcohol Research at the time to the New York Times.

Kevin Morse, president of Spirit Partners in Greensboro, N.C., which markets the devices, known as Alcohol Without Liquid, or AWOL, said they were harmless.

'At the end of the day, it's just a new way for adults to enjoy alcohol in a different manner,' said Mr. Morse.

The danger of vaporized alcohol entering the bloodstream directly as opposed to the digestive system means that protective impulses - such as vomiting - are bypassed.

In fact, it is the swift infusion of alcohol to the brain that makes inhalation more addictive than regular drinking according to scientists.

Robert Swift, a professor of psychiatry at Brown Medical School told [Slate.com](http://Slate.com/) that when researchers want to model alcohol addiction in rats they often expose them to air mixed with vaporized alcohol.

This is a standard test because it is hard to get rats to drink alcohol, but the desired dependence they seek for their results comes within a matter of days using vapor.

'It's a good way to addict animals,' said Swift.

<http://www.vaportini.com/home.html>