Cart Clogging and Troubleshooting

Understanding Vape Carts and Their Function

A vape cart consists of a mouthpiece, a heating element (usually a coil or atomizer), and a reservoir for vape oil. When you take a draw, the heating element activates, heating the vape oil into vapor, which you inhale through the mouthpiece. Regular maintenance is essential for optimal performance and to prevent clogs.

Common Causes of Cart Clogs

Temperature Changes: Exposure to extreme temperatures can cause vape oil to thicken or congeal, leading to clogs.

Exposure to extreme temperatures can significantly impact the performance of your vape. If your vape is left in a room above 70°F (21°C), the oil inside the cartridge may leak and harden around the air holes as it cools. Conversely, temperatures below 60°F (16°C) can cause the oil to become more viscous, making it difficult to draw through your vape. Both scenarios can lead to clogs and affect your vaping experience.

Improper Storage: Storing carts in direct sunlight, high humidity, or extreme temperatures can degrade the oil, causing it to solidify and clog.

Laying your vape on its side can lead to oil accumulating around the heating coil or even leaking out of the cartridge. To prevent this, always store your vape upright. This helps ensure that the oil stays in the cartridge and does not seep into the mouthpiece, maintaining optimal performance and reducing the risk of clogs.

Residue Buildup: Over time, residue from vape oil can accumulate, restricting airflow.

When you take only 3–5 seconds between each vape hit, the oil in the cartridge heats up and can sometimes pull through the mouthpiece. As the oil cools and hardens, it may create a blockage in the airflow. This phenomenon, known as "chain vaping," often occurs in social settings when multiple people share the same vape.

Each time you use your vape pen, moisture and oil accumulate inside the mouthpiece. Over time, this buildup can create a blockage at the top of the mouthpiece. If you notice an unpleasant flavor when vaping, it often indicates that condensation has formed and is causing the obstruction

***Chamber Flooding**

When a vape is left unused for an extended period, the oil inside the cartridge can thicken and accumulate around the heating coil in the chamber. This buildup can prevent the coil from reaching the necessary temperature to produce vapor effectively. If you notice a burning smell or taste when using your vape, it may be a sign that the device is permanently damaged. In such cases, it's advisable to discard the vape rather than attempting to clean it.

Signs of a Clogged Vape Cartridge

Restricted Airflow: If your vape pen feels like you’re inhaling through a straw, it likely has a clog.

Burnt Taste: A burnt taste indicates uneven burning of the oil, often due to a clog.

Inconsistent Vapor Production: If your vape pen produces inconsistent vapor or dry hits, it could be due to a clog.

Step-by-Step Guide to Unclogging a Cart

Identify the Clog: Ensure your cart is clogged by looking for signs like restricted airflow or burnt taste.
Check the Connection: Ensure the cart and battery connection is secured.
Warm it Up: Gently heat the cart with a hairdryer on low to loosen thick oil.
Clear the Airway: Use a thin pin or needle to gently dislodge any blockage in the airway.
Clean the Contacts: Use a cotton swab dipped in isopropyl alcohol to clean the contacts on both the cart and battery.
Try a Different Battery (if applicable): If the clog persists, use a different compatible battery.

Example:
Try breathing in slowly when you hit your vape.
When you use your vape, try breathing in slowly. If your vape has a button, hold it down to warm up the battery. Then, gently inhale through the mouthpiece to heat any oil buildup. After a few short, slow breaths, the oil clogging your vape cart will thin out, clearing the blockage.

Taking slow breaths also prevents oil from coming through the mouthpiece and into your mouth. This method works for any type of vape, whether it's a reusable battery or disposable. It doesn't matter if you're using CBD, THC, or a hybrid.

Blow through the mouthpiece to force the clog out
To clear a clog in your vape, blow through the mouthpiece. Press the button on your vape pen and gently blow into the cartridge instead of inhaling. The force of your breath will push excess oil back towards the heating coil, where it will warm up and vaporize.

If you have a buttonless vape pen or a disposable e-cig, gently blow into the end of the battery opposite the mouthpiece. The battery will still activate and warm the oil, clearing the clog without the risk of inhaling oil residue.

Preheat your cartridge before use to ensure a smooth hit.

If your vape has a button, hold it down for a few seconds before inhaling to allow the clogged oil to melt away. For vapes without a button that activate upon inhalation, breathe in gently through the mouthpiece to warm up the battery.

Some vapes come with a preheat setting that you can activate by quickly pressing the button 2 or 3 times. Preheating is particularly effective for THC and CBD vapes with thick oil.

Warm up the cart with a hair dryer to melt the clog away.

Warm up the cart with a hair dryer to melt the clog away. Set your hair dryer to the "Hot" setting on full power. Hold your vape cartridge about 6 inches (15 cm) in front of the hair dryer and heat it for about 15–30 seconds. Once it's warmed up, try hitting your vape for a smooth pull.

Scrape oil out from the mouthpiece with a paper clip

Straighten a paper clip to reach inside your vape cartridge. Unscrew the cartridge from the vape pen and insert the paper clip into the mouthpiece. Scrape away the oil inside to break up the clog. Next, insert the paper clip into the hole at the bottom of the cartridge to remove any buildup. Be careful not to push the paper clip further than 1/2 inch (1.3 cm) to avoid damaging the internal components. Wipe the clip on a napkin or paper towel to clean off the oil residue and prevent it from spreading.

Clean around the air holes with a cotton swab and isopropyl alcohol.

Clean around the air holes with a cotton swab and isopropyl alcohol. Begin by unscrewing your vape cartridge from the battery. Moisten the end of a cotton swab with isopropyl alcohol, ensuring it's damp but not dripping. Locate the circular air holes on the bottom of the cartridge where it connects to the battery. Gently run the cotton swab around these holes and the threading to remove any excess oil.

Don't forget to check the battery of your vape pen for residue as well. Examine the circular center pin where the cartridge attaches and use the cotton swab to clean off any oil. Be cautious not to press down on the center pin to avoid damaging it.

Adjust Temperature Settings
To avoid issues with oil consistency in your vape, begin with a lower temperature setting. This helps to prevent the oil from thinning excessively, which can lead to leaks or clogs. Gradually increase the temperature only as needed to find the optimal balance for vapor production and flavor. By starting with a lower setting, you minimize the risk of overheating the oil and ensure a smoother, more controlled vaping experience. Properly adjusting the temperature can enhance the longevity of your cartridge and improve the overall performance of your vape.