



Delaware General Health District HEALTH ALERT

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UPDATE: Severe Pulmonary Disease Associated with E-Cigarettes or “Vaping”

Summary

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and multiple states are investigating the occurrence of severe pulmonary disease among people who report vaping. As of October 08, 2019, there are 1,299 lung injury cases reported from 49 states and 1 U.S. territory. Twenty-six deaths have been confirmed in 21 states. Rapid recognition by health care providers of patients with e-cigarette, or vaping, product use associated lung injury (EVALI) and an increased understanding of treatment considerations could reduce morbidity and mortality associated with this injury.

As of October 10, 2019, state and local public health officials in Ohio have confirmed 32 cases of vaping-related severe pulmonary illness and are investigating an additional 32 reports of illness. Updates on the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) investigation can be found on the Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation program webpage under “News & Events”.

Background

All patients have reported a history of using e-cigarette, or vaping, products. Most patients report a history of using tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)-containing products. The latest national and state findings suggest products containing THC, particularly those obtained off the street or from other informal sources (e.g. friends, family members, illicit dealers), are linked to most of the cases and play a major role in the outbreak. Therefore, CDC recommends that you should not use e-cigarette, or vaping, products that contain THC. Exclusive use of nicotine containing products has been reported by some patients with lung injury cases, and many patients with lung injury report combined use of THC- and nicotine-containing products. Therefore, the possibility that nicotine-containing products play a role in this outbreak cannot be excluded. At present, CDC continues to recommend that people consider refraining from using e-cigarette, or vaping, products that contain nicotine.

Patients present with respiratory symptoms including cough, shortness of breath and fatigue. Symptoms worsen over a period of days or weeks before admission to the hospital. Other symptoms may include fever, anorexia, pleuritic chest pain, nausea, abdominal pain and diarrhea. Chest radiographs show bilateral opacities, typically in the lower lobes and CT imaging of the chest shows diffuse ground glass opacities, often with subpleural sparing. Evaluation for infectious etiologies were negative in all patients. Some patients had progressive respiratory compromise requiring endotracheal intubation but subsequently improved with systemic steroids.

Recommendations

Report cases of significant respiratory illness of unclear etiology and a history of vaping in the past 90 days to the Delaware General Health District (DGHD) by calling (740) 203-2039 or fax reports to our secure fax line- (740) 203-2044. Report these suspect cases by the close of the next business day following patient presentation.

Clinical Report Form: <https://redcap.odh.ohio.gov/surveys/?s=9D3F48RCKE>

For more information

On the outbreak in Ohio: <https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/tobacco-use-prevention-and-cessation/news-and-events/>

On the national outbreak: https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/severe-lung-disease.html