E-cigarette and Vaping Product Use-Associated Lung Injury Outbreak (EVALI)

Key Facts & Messages

This information is current as of November 15, 2019

The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) and state and local health departments, including the Vermont Department of Health, have been investigating a multi-state outbreak of a severe lung injury associated with e-cigarette product use, or vaping (EVALI).

Vermont Department of Health: healthvermont.gov/vapinginjury
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: cdc.gov/lunginjury

CASE NUMBERS

National: As of November 13, there have been 2,172 cases reported from 49 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands. 42 deaths have been confirmed in 24 states.

Vermont: As of November 12, there are 3 confirmed cases. There have been no deaths in Vermont associated with this outbreak.

WHAT WE KNOW

- New lab findings from CDC provide direct evidence of vitamin E acetate at the primary site of injury within the lungs, making it a chief chemical of concern.
- Most patients report a history of using vaping products containing THC — particularly products obtained from informal sources such as friends, and online or in-person dealers.
- Vitamin E acetate is an additive in some THC-containing products, often used as a thickening agent.
- Until the relationship of vitamin E acetate and lung health is better understood, vitamin E acetate should not be added to e-cigarette, or vaping, products.

WHAT WE DON’T KNOW

- While it appears that vitamin E acetate is associated with EVALI, we can’t yet rule out contribution of other chemicals.
- Many different substances and product sources are still under investigation – including nicotine, and it may be that there is more than one cause of this outbreak.

KEY MESSAGES FOR VERMONTERS

- Do not use e-cigarette or vaping products that contain THC.
- Do not buy or use vaping products from informal sources, or from online or in-person dealers.
• Do not modify or add substances to e-cigarettes or vapes that are not intended by the manufacturer, even if bought through a retail establishment.

• Refrain from using products that contain nicotine.

• The only way to make sure you are not at risk is to not vape.

• Get medical attention immediately if you develop symptoms and recently used an e-cigarette or vaping product:
  o cough, shortness of breath or chest pain, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, fatigue, fever or abdominal pain

• Symptoms of the flu are similar to symptoms of EVALI
  o See your health care provider immediately if you used an e-cigarette or vaping product and think you may have the flu.
  o Get vaccinated against the flu.

• Quit Tobacco or Vaping
  o Young adults and teens can text “VtVapeFree” to 88709 to get help and support.
  o For help quitting nicotine: Go to 802quits.org or dial 1-800-QUIT-NOW.
  o For help to quitting cannabis: Dial 2-1-1 or go to healthvermont.gov/find-treatment to find treatment options near you.
  o If you stop using vaping products, do not go back to conventional cigarettes.

ABOUT VITAMIN E ACETATE

• Vitamin E is a vitamin found in many foods, including vegetable oils, cereals, meat, fruits, and vegetables. It is also available as a dietary supplement and in many cosmetic products, like skin creams.

• Vitamin E acetate usually does not cause harm when ingested as a vitamin supplement or applied to the skin. However, previous research suggests when vitamin E acetate is inhaled, it may interfere with normal lung functioning.

• Vitamin E acetate is used as an additive in the production of e-cigarette, or vaping, products, because it resembles THC oil. Vitamin E acetate is also used as a thickening ingredient in e-liquids.

FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

• Health care providers should strongly consider respiratory infections as well as lung injury associated with the use of e-cigarette or vaping products in all patients who have respiratory symptoms AND a history of using these products.

• Vermont Department of Health Update: E-cigarette or Vaping-associated Lung Injury (EVALI) (October 18, 2019)

• CDC: Fact Sheet for Evaluating and Caring for Patients with Suspected EVALI (October 25, 2019)

• CDC: Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity Webinar Slides – Update: Interim Guidance for Health Care Providers Evaluating and Caring for Patients with suspected EVALI (October 17, 2019)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THIS OUTBREAK

CDC information about this outbreak: cdc.gov/lunginjury

What are the symptoms of lung injury reported by some patients?
- cough, shortness of breath or chest pain, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain or diarrhea, fatigue, fever or weight loss.
- Some patients have reported that their symptoms developed over a few days, while others have reported their symptoms developed over several weeks. A chemical exposure, not a lung infection, appears to be causing the injury.

What should I do if I have symptoms and recently used an e-cigarette or vaping product?
- Get medical attention right away if you have symptoms like those reported in this outbreak.
- You can also call the New England Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222 or text “POISON” to 85511.
- You can submit a report to the FDA of any health or product concerns related to tobacco or e-cigarette products using the Safety Reporting Portal.

What if I quit smoking cigarettes and am now using e-cigarettes?
- Until more is known about the exact cause of vaping-associated lung injuries, it’s recommended you consider refraining from using e-cigarette products. Do not return to smoking cigarettes.
- If you continue to use e-cigarettes, carefully watch for symptoms and get medical attention right away if you have symptoms like those reported in this outbreak.
- For help quitting nicotine – including e-cigarettes – go to 802quits.org – or dial 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

Should I get vaccinated for the flu if I am using e-cigarettes or vaping products?
- Yes. Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine every year, including people who use e-cigarettes, or vaping products.
- Flu vaccination can reduce flu illnesses, doctor’s visits, and missed work and school due to flu, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations and deaths.
- Because the symptoms of flu and lung injury are similar, if you use e-cigarettes or vape and experience symptoms get medical attention right away.
- Find where to get a flu shot near you: healthvermont.gov/flu

Additional Resources

Vermont Department of Health
- EVALI (Lung Injury Investigation): [healthvermont.gov/vapinginjury](http://healthvermont.gov/vapinginjury)
- E-cigarettes and Vaping: [healthvermont.gov/wellness/tobacco/resources](http://healthvermont.gov/wellness/tobacco/resources)

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**
- For the Public: [cdc.gov/lunginjury](http://cdc.gov/lunginjury)
- For Providers: [cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/severe-lung-disease/healthcare-providers/index.html#flu](http://cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/severe-lung-disease/healthcare-providers/index.html#flu)

**Food and Drug Administration**