

## 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](http://healthvermont.gov/vapinginjury)  
**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:** [cdc.gov/lunginjury](http://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:
  - 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**
  - See your health care provider immediately if you used an e-cigarette or vaping product and think you may have the flu.
  - Get vaccinated against the flu.
- **Quit Tobacco or Vaping**
  - Young adults and teens can text “*VtVapeFree*” to 88709 to get help and support.
  - For help quitting nicotine: Go to [802quits.org](http://802quits.org) or dial 1-800-QUIT-NOW.
  - For help to quitting cannabis: Dial 2-1-1 or go to [healthvermont.gov/find-treatment](http://healthvermont.gov/find-treatment) to find treatment options near you.
  - 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 \(October 17, 2019\)](#)

- **CDC:** Coding guidance for healthcare encounters related to e-cigarette, or vaping, product use associated lung injury: [International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Edition, Clinical Modification \(ICD-10-CM\) – Supplement](#)

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THIS OUTBREAK

**CDC information about this outbreak:** [cdc.gov/lunginjury](https://www.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](https://www.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](https://www.healthvermont.gov/flu)

## Additional Resources

Vermont Department of Health

- EVALI (Lung Injury Investigation): [healthvermont.gov/vapinginjury](https://healthvermont.gov/vapinginjury)
- E-cigarettes and Vaping: [healthvermont.gov/wellness/tobacco/resources](https://healthvermont.gov/wellness/tobacco/resources)

#### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

- For the Public: [cdc.gov/lunginjury](https://cdc.gov/lunginjury)
- For Providers: [cdc.gov/tobacco/basic\\_information/e-cigarettes/severe-lung-disease/healthcare-providers/index.html#flu](https://cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/severe-lung-disease/healthcare-providers/index.html#flu)

#### **Food and Drug Administration**

- For the Public: [fda.gov/news-events/public-health-focus/lung-illnesses-associated-use-vaping-products](https://fda.gov/news-events/public-health-focus/lung-illnesses-associated-use-vaping-products)