

VAPING

The Dangers of Vaping

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why are e-cigarettes in the news right now?

Reports of sudden, severe lung illness and deaths associated with e-cigarettes have been reported across the majority of the states and in 1 U.S. territory. The specific cause has yet to be identified and is under investigation by local, state, and federal health officials. For the latest information and reports on serious vaping-associated pulmonary injury in Los Angeles County, please visit: www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/sapc/public/vaping-faq.htm.

What are e-cigarettes?

E-cigarettes are electronic devices that use a battery-powered mechanism that heats a liquid to form vapors – or more accurately, aerosol – that the user can inhale, i.e., “vaping.” These liquids are not just water and may contain various flavorings, nicotine, cannabis or marijuana, or other potentially harmful substances and chemicals. E-cigarettes come in many shapes and sizes and are known by different names including “e-cigs,” “vapes,” “vape pens,” “mods,” and “tank systems.” The aerosol emitted by e-cigarettes contains harmful substances, including:

- Nicotine
- Cancer causing chemicals
- Heavy metals
- Flavorings linked to lung disease
- Volatile organic compounds

They can also be used to deliver other potentially harmful chemicals such as cannabis/tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) or cannabidiol (CBD).

Are e-cigarettes safe to use?

There is increasing evidence of e-cigarettes causing severe lung illness, potentially leading to death among a variety of users, and we urge everyone to stop using these products now.

If you currently use e-cigarettes or vaping products, we suggest you stop using them. This advice is especially important for adults who have never used or do not currently use tobacco products, youth, young adults, and pregnant women. These products can lead to nicotine addiction and cause harm for fetal and brain development, which continues throughout adolescence and into young adulthood.

If you cannot stop now, you should not purchase products off the street or from unlicensed facilities, and you should not modify or add substances to e-cigarette products. This is a recommendation of both the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Are e-cigarettes effective as an aid to quit smoking?

E-cigarettes are not approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as an aid or treatment to quit smoking.

Anyone attempting to quit should contact their health care provider for counseling and an FDA-approved, evidence-based treatment. The California Smokers' Helpline offers help to quit smoking and vaping. Adults, youth, and parents of youth who vape can call the Helpline for free counseling and assistance: 1-800-NO-BUTTS.

How many reports of e-cigarette-associated severe pulmonary (lung) diseases are there?

For the most current information on this important national issue, visit www.cdc.gov/ecigarettes. The CDC will update current case numbers in real-time. Until more research can be done, the overall health impacts of vaping remain uncertain. The current cases of severe lung disease among people who vape raise significant concerns about the safety of vaping.

Total Number of Cases in Los Angeles County: 32
as of November 21, 2019

Almost all patients involved have reported using e-cigarette products, and many have reported using similar products containing cannabinoid compounds such as THC or CBD.

What are the symptoms of severe pulmonary disease associated with e-cigarette use?

Patients with these types of pulmonary injuries have reported the following symptoms a few days or a few weeks after e-cigarette use:

- Cough, shortness of breath, and chest pain
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Fatigue, fever, or weight loss

If you are experiencing any of the above symptoms and have recently used, or are currently using an e-cigarette product, please seek medical care immediately for further evaluation and treatment.

Resources for those wishing to quit smoking/vaping, or with further questions:

- 1-800-NO-BUTTS or www.nobutts.org
- www.cdc.gov/ecigarettes
- <https://laquits.com>
- Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Tobacco Control and Prevention Program: www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/tob
- Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Substance Abuse and Prevention Control. Call our Substance Abuse Helpline anytime: 1-844-804-7500