



Public Health Brief

Richard O. Johnson, M.D., MPH

Public Health Officer

Office: 530-694-2235, Ext 249

e-mail: rjohnson@alpinecountyca.gov

Nichole Williamson

HHS Director

Office: 530-694-2235

24/7/365 Emergency Contact Numbers

Dr. Johnson's cell: (760) 914-0496

Dispatch: 530-694-2231, Ext 330



Tuesday August 20, 2019

Vaping-associated Acute Lung Injury

Since June 2019, 20 cases of severe acute pulmonary injury needing respiratory support among previously health adults have been reported from 9 counties across California. In addition, there are now 15 states reporting a total of approximately 100 cases under investigation. Initial cases were among youth; however, the age range among the California cases ranges from 15-61, with half being below the age of 27 years.

Individuals presented to hospitals with progressive shortness of breath, chest pain, cough, fatigue, and weight loss developing over a period of days or weeks prior to admission. Some have had preceding fever with nausea and diarrhea and have been diagnosed with pneumonia or bronchitis. Evaluation for possible infections has been negative. The severity of disease has varied, with many needing ICU care and a breathing tube with a ventilator in order to survive. While patients have improved with treatment, it is not known if there will be long-term health effects.

All persons reported vaping in the weeks prior to hospitalization, and a reported common exposure between these individuals is that they have been vaping cannabis or CBD oils. Vaping refers to the increasingly popular practice of inhaling vapor from an e-cigarette device, which works by heating a liquid that can contain nicotine, marijuana, or other drugs. Although use of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)-containing products is common to all, no specific product has been identified by all cases, nor has any product been conclusively linked to this clinical picture.

Important information in a person's history includes:

- the use of commercially available devices and/or liquids (i.e., bottles, cartridges, or pods).
- sharing of e-cigarette products (devices, liquids, refill pods and/or cartridges) with other people.



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Alpine County Health Department, 75-B Diamond Valley Rd., Markleeville, CA 96120

Alpine County Board of Supervisors, Phone: (530) 694-2281

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- re-using old cartridges or pods (with homemade or commercially bought products).
- heating the drug to concentrate it and then using a specific type of device to inhale the vaporized product (i.e. “dabbing”).

While the short- and long-term effects of vaping are still being researched, these recent hospitalizations heighten the need for parents to talk with their teens about vaping and for both to understand the consequences and potential dangers of vaping.

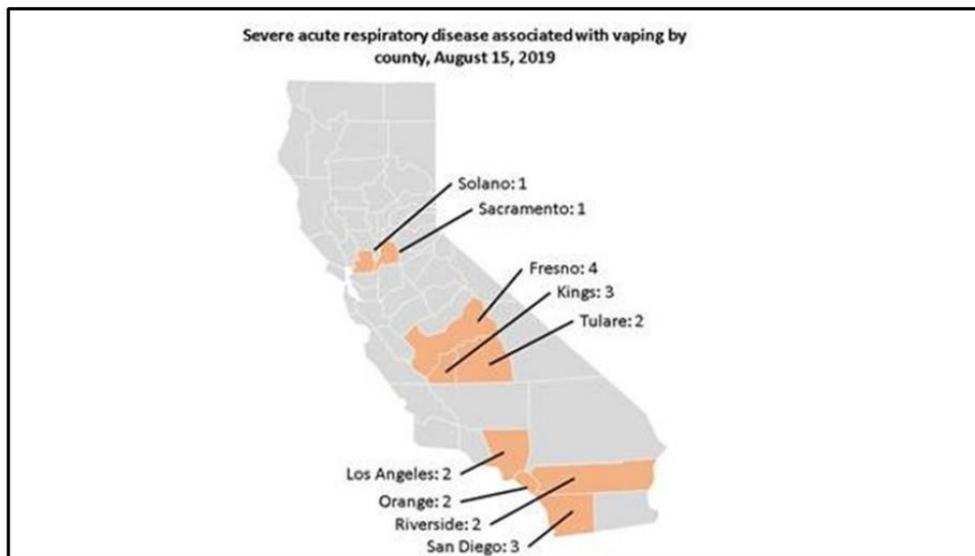
• **Information on electronic cigarettes and similar devices:**

https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/index.htm

People who experience any type of chest pain or difficulty breathing after vaping in the weeks or months prior to these symptoms should seek immediate medical attention and **TELL** the healthcare provider about their history of vaping.

Healthcare providers caring for patients with unexpected serious respiratory illness should **ASK** about a history of recent vaping.

The California Poison Control System provides immediate, free, and expert treatment advice and referral over the telephone in case of exposure to poisonous or toxic substances. Pharmacists, nurses, and poison information providers answer the calls to 1-800-222-1222 and are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Language interpreters are always available, just say the language you need when you call.



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