



PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY:  
**Severe Pulmonary Disease  
Associated with Vaping**

October 4, 2019

From Columbus Public Health and  
Franklin County Public Health

**What you need to know**

Multiple states have reported patients experiencing severe respiratory disease after using e-cigarette or vapor products. As of October 1, 2019, there were 1,050 lung injury cases reported and 18 confirmed deaths in 15 states.

Ohio Department of Health Director Dr. Amy Acton has now ordered health care providers, as defined in section 3701.23 of the Revised Code, or any individual having knowledge, to report by the end of the next business day all suspected cases of severe pulmonary illness of unclear etiology with a history of vaping in the ninety (90) days prior to symptom onset.

**What to watch for**

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.

**What you can do**

Always inquire about potential drug (legal and illicit) use as part of a general history. When patients present with respiratory or pulmonary illness, especially of unclear etiology, clinicians should ask about the use of e-cigarette products for vaping. If possible, inquire about the types of drugs used and methods of drug use (e.g., smoking, vaping). Healthcare providers should also ask patients about any retained product for possible testing.

If an e-cigarette product is suspected as a possible etiology of a patient's illness, it is important to inquire what type of product as well as if the patient is:

- using commercially available devices and/or liquids
- sharing e-cigarette products with other people;
- re-using old cartridges or pods; or
- heating the drug to concentrate it and then using a specific type of device to inhale the product (i.e., "dabbing").

All suspected cases must be reported by the close of the next business day to the local health department in the jurisdiction in which the case resides. For cases that reside in Franklin County, report cases by calling 614-525-8888.

**Who is at risk**

At this time, it is unknown what product(s) or chemicals may be linked to these illnesses so anyone who uses any type of vaping product may be at risk.

**To learn more**

<https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/media-center/odh-news-releases/pulmonary-illness-following-vaping>

[https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic\\_information/e-cigarettes/](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/)

[Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity \(COCA\)](#)

[Outbreak of Lung Injury Associated with E-cigarette Product Use or Vaping: Information for Clinicians Presentation](#)

E-Cigarette Use Among Young People Video ([long form](#) and [short form](#))