

February 13, 2020

Vaping-Associated Lung Injury (VALI)

Actions Requested

- Be aware that the State Health Officer is requesting provisional reporting of vaping-associated lung injury cases for an additional 120 days.
- Continue reporting cases of vaping-associated lung injury to your local health jurisdiction within 3 days.
- Ask about the use of e-cigarette or vapor products when evaluating patients with respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, chest pain, and shortness or breath), gastrointestinal symptoms (e.g., abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, and diarrhea), or nonspecific constitutional symptoms (e.g., fever, chills, and weight loss).
- Ask patients about recent use of e-cigarette or vapor products. If confirmed, the types of substances used (e.g., THC and nicotine) and where they were obtained should be ascertained.
- Please report patients who meet the following criteria to your local health jurisdiction.
 - Any hospitalized patient who:
 - Reports vaping or dabbing in the 90 days prior to symptom onset AND
 - Has a chest x-ray with pulmonary infiltrates or a chest CT scan with ground-glass opacities AND
 - Has no pulmonary infection (i.e., negative viral respiratory panel, negative flu test, and other clinically-indicated respiratory infectious disease testing negative) or an infection has been identified, but you feel this is not the sole cause of the lung injury or complete infectious disease testing was not performed, but you feel an infection is not the sole cause of the lung injury AND
 - There is no other alternative plausible diagnosis such as a cardiac, rheumatologic or neoplastic process
 - Note: For more information, see the full [CDC case definition](#)
- If e-cigarette or vaping product use is suspected as a possible etiology of a patient's lung injury obtain a detailed history regarding: substance(s) used, substance source(s), device(s) used, where the product(s) were purchased, method of substance use.
- For questions, please contact our Communicable Disease staff at 360-728-2235.

Background

While the multi-state outbreak of vaping-associated lung injury has waned nationally, the CDC and public health agencies in Washington State continue to investigate vaping-associated lung injury to better understand its prevalence and cause(s). The latest information about the outbreak can be found on the CDC and WA Department of Health websites.

National data from patient reports and product sample testing show tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)-containing vapor products, particularly from informal sources like friends, family, or in-person or online dealers, are linked to most VALI cases and play a major role in the outbreak. Vitamin E acetate, a product used to produce THC-containing vapor products, is also strongly linked to the VALI outbreak. Vitamin E acetate has been found in product samples tested by FDA and state laboratories and in patient lung fluid samples tested by CDC from geographically diverse states. Evidence is not sufficient to rule out the contribution of other chemicals of concern, including chemicals in either THC or non-THC products, in some of the reported VALI cases.

Resources

- WA DOH information: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/emergencies/vapingassociatedlunginjury>
- CDC case definition: https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/severe-lung-disease/health-departments/index.html
- CDC outbreak information: https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/severe-lung-disease.html?s_cid=osh-stu-home-spotlight-006
- CDC clinical considerations for healthcare providers: https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/severe-lung-disease/healthcare-providers/index.html