

HEALTH ALERT

Lung Injury Associated with E-Cigarettes or Vaping: Updated Clinical Guidance for Health Care Providers

December 20, 2019

Update from Health Alert released September 30, 2019

Summary and Action Items

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and multiple states continue to investigate the occurrence of severe pulmonary disease among people who report vaping. This severe pulmonary disease may be referred to as e-cigarette, or vaping, product use–associated lung injury (EVALI). More information on the CDC’s investigation (including updated case counts) can be found [here](#).
- As of December 19, 2019, state and local public health officials in Ohio have confirmed 91 cases of EVALI. Updates on the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) investigation can be found on the Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation program webpage [here](#).
- **On December 20, 2019, CDC released updated clinical guidance for health care providers for managing patients with suspected EVALI.**
- **ODH is requesting that this alert be distributed to all health care providers in your jurisdiction.**

Background

CDC, U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), state and local health departments, and other clinical and public health partners are investigating a national outbreak of EVALI. As of December 17, 2019, 2,506 hospitalized EVALI cases have been reported to CDC from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and two U.S. territories. Fifty-four deaths have been confirmed in 27 states and the District of Columbia. Although the number of reported cases appears to be declining, clinicians should continue to report possible cases of EVALI for further investigation. ODH requires health care providers or any individual having knowledge, to report to their local health department (LHD) by the end of the next business day, all suspected cases of severe pulmonary disease of unclear etiology with a history of vaping in the past 90 days. A clinician report form for EVALI is attached.

Potential Exposures and Prevention

CDC, FDA, and state health authorities have made progress in identifying substances of concern in EVALI. However, there are many different substances and product sources that remain under investigation, and there may be more than one cause. The latest national and state data from patient reports and product sample testing suggest tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)-containing e-cigarette products, particularly from informal sources like friends, family, or in-person or online dealers, are linked to most cases and play a major role in the outbreak. While it appears that vitamin E acetate is associated with EVALI, there are many different substances and product sources that are being investigated. CDC and FDA recommend

that people should not use THC-containing e-cigarette products, particularly from informal sources. People who use e-cigarette products should not buy them off the street and should not modify e-cigarette products or add any substances that are not intended by the manufacturer, regardless of the ongoing investigation.

CDC Guidance for Health Care Providers

EVALI remains a diagnosis of exclusion because, at present, no specific test or marker exists for its diagnosis, and evaluation should be guided by clinical judgment. Rapid recognition of EVALI patients by healthcare providers is critical to reduce severe outcomes. On December 20, 2019, CDC released updated guidance for health care providers for managing patients within suspected EVALI. This information can be found in the attached Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) or on the CDC's lung injury webpage for health care providers [here](#).

Key updates include:

- Patients should be in stable condition for 24–48 hours prior to discharge.
- Patients should have a follow-up visit with a primary care physician or pulmonary specialist optimally within 48 hours of discharge to minimize the risk of rehospitalization or death (previously recommended within 2 weeks of discharge).

ODH and LHD Response

LHDs who hear about suspected EVALI cases should notify ODH. ODH will gather information from LHDs about cases within Ohio to look for common exposures and more information on products and chemicals linked to illnesses.

Contact

Report all suspected EVALI cases to the local health department in the jurisdiction in which the case resides by completing the attached report form. Please report these suspect cases by the close of the next business day following patient presentation. To locate a local health department, please visit <https://odhgateway.odh.ohio.gov/lhdinformationsystem/Directory/GetMyLHD>.

For additional information, clinicians can contact their local health department or the Ohio Department of Health, Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation Program.

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Attachments

- MMWR Updated Guidance for Health Care Providers (12/20/2019)
- ODH HAN (released 9/30/2019)
- ODH Clinician Report Form– Severe Respiratory Disease Associated with Vaping (version 2.0 – dated 9/26/2019)