



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 13, 2019

Death Associated with E-Cigarettes in Marin County

Public Health Authorities Warn Against Vaping



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San Rafael, CA - A Marin County resident has died from complications related to the use of e-cigarettes and the Marin County Department of Health of Human Services is warning community members about the potentially dangerous effects of e-cigarettes, or vaping.

"With sadness, we report that there has been a death in our community suspected to be caused by severe lung injury associated with vaping," said Dr. Matt Willis, Marin County Public Health Officer.

The victim was a previously healthy woman in her forties, who took up vaping six months ago.

This is the fourth vaping associated death in California since July 2019. Last week the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [reported](#) 39 deaths nationally, and over 2,000 suspected cases so far in the national epidemic of lung damage associated with e-cigarettes.

"The message is simple: it's not safe to vape," said Dr. Willis. "Until we have a better understanding of the cause of this outbreak, it's best to avoid these products entirely."

In September, as case counts rose nationally, Marin County Public Health [sent out a warning](#) recommending that residents cease e-cigarette use and vaping until the cause of the outbreak could be determined.

In response to growing concerns about safety and increasing rates of vaping among Marin youth, many Marin County cities and towns banned the local sale of flavored tobacco and vaping products in 2019, following the [County's adoption of an ordinance in 2018](#). Most of these local ordinances do not go into effect until January 2020.

While the specific products or compounds that cause lung injury after e-cigarette use are not yet known, the CDC has found Vitamin E acetate is likely to be contributor in some cases. Vitamin E is an oil-based vitamin that is sometimes added to vaping liquids, especially those containing the psycho-active cannabis compound THC. However, many confirmed cases of lung injury have not been tied to this compound.

[Marin County Public Health](#) is working with the California Department of Public Health and the CDC to obtain and test samples to determine the specific products that may have contributed to this tragic death.

Symptoms of e-cigarette and vaping-associated lung injury (EVALI) can include shortness of breath, coughing, or chest pain, often accompanied by nausea, fever, vomiting, or diarrhea. If you previously used e-cigarettes and are experiencing symptoms, you should seek prompt medical attention and let your healthcare provider know that you have vaped.

E-cigarettes, or vape devices, are battery-powered devices that individuals use to inhale an aerosol which can contain nicotine, cannabis, flavorings, and other chemicals. There are several thousand formulations available for purchase, and many have not been tested for safety.

“Like smoking, we recognize that quitting vaping can be challenging,” said Dr. Willis. “We want to help support people as they quit vaping and there are several resources available to help people overcome a vaping addiction.”

Quitting vaping improves your health and reduces risk of heart disease, cancer, lung disease, and other smoking-related illnesses. Help is available through the California Smokers’ Helpline, www.nobutts.org, which now has a separate line specifically for vaping.

- Vape Users: 1-844-8-NO-VAPE (1-844-866-8273)
- Smokers: 1-800-NO-BUTTS (1-800-662-8887)

For more information about tobacco cessation resources in Marin County go to Marinhhs.org.

For more information about e-cigarette, or vaping, product use associated lung injury nationally and in California, visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and the [California Department of Public Health](#).

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