



DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.



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Vaping Associated Pulmonary Injury

Hyacinth Guillermo Hinojosa
ACTING DIRECTOR

Matthew Willis, MD, MPH
PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER

Lisa M. Santora, MD, MPH
DEPUTY PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER

3240 Kerner Boulevard
San Rafael, CA 94901
415 473 4163 T
415 473 2326 F
415 473 3232 TTY
www.marincounty.org/hhs

Dear Colleagues:

Situation

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has reported 20 cases in the past two months of severe acute pulmonary disease among previously healthy adults associated with vaping cannabis or cannabidiol (CBD) oils. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Federal Drug Administration are [investigating](#) 153 possible cases of severe lung illness associated with e-cigarette product use reported by 15 states, including California, from June 28, 2019, to August 22, 2019. One death has been confirmed.

There have been no reported cases in Marin County. A cluster of seven cases of Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS) was identified in Kings County (CA). All cases experienced progressive respiratory distress after initial diagnosis of pneumonia or bronchitis, with failure to respond to antibiotic treatment. Evaluations for infectious etiologies were negative. All reported vaping cannabis or CBD oils in the weeks prior to hospital admission.

Actions Requested of Clinicians

- Clinicians are asked to remain alert for potential cases among persons presenting with severe acute pulmonary symptoms and determine if there may have been a recent history of vaping.
- Clinicians should consider vaping associated pulmonary injury in patients who present with signs or symptoms consistent with pneumonitis or bronchitis, especially if they fail to respond to initial course of antibiotics.
- Clinicians should report similar cases to Marin County Public Health by phone 415-473-4163 (after hours call 415-499-7237).
- If a suspected case has a vaping product on hand, it should be collected and held for testing, to be arranged by Marin County Public Health.
- Clinicians should continue to counsel patients about the known health risks associated with e-cigarette use and vaping.

Background

Vaping refers to the increasingly popular practice of inhaling vapor from an electronic smoking device, or e-cigarette, which heat-vaporizes liquids that can contain nicotine, chemical flavorings, cannabis, or other drugs. The liquids used in e-cigarettes are largely unregulated and can contain toxic chemicals that cause lung damage. These cases of lung injury come in the context of rapid increases in vaping rates across Marin. Nearly one in three 11th graders in Marin reports vaping on a regular basis, more than double the 2016 rate.

Resources

CDC. About Electronic Cigarettes (E-Cigarettes).

https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/about-e-cigarettes.html

CDPH. Let's Talk Cannabis.

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/DO/letstalkcannabis/Pages/LetsTalkCannabis.aspx>

Marin Health and Human Services (Marin HHS). Alarming New Data on Youth Vaping in Marin.

<https://www.marincounty.org/main/county-press-releases/press-releases/2018/hhs-vaping-092118>

Marin HHS. Tobacco Prevention Services. <https://www.marinhhs.org/tobacco-prevention-services>