

8/23/2019

** NOTICE: This health alert provides written guidance for health care professionals and others who may need to take action to prevent or control a notifiable condition. It is not intended to provide guidance for the general public.*

Unexplained Vaping-associated Pulmonary Illness

Actions Requested

Report cases of significant respiratory illness of unclear etiology in patients with a history of use of e-cigarette products (devices, liquids, refill pods and/or cartridges) for “vaping” to the Communicable Disease Reporting line at 360-786-5470.

Consider all possible causes of illness in patients presenting with these symptoms, even if they report a history of e-cigarette product use. Evaluate and treat for other likely causes of illness (e.g., infectious or other) as clinically indicated. Evaluation for common infectious etiologies when also suspected should be pursued and less common infections, and rheumatologic or neoplastic processes considered, as clinically indicated. Aggressive supportive care in these possible or suspected cases is warranted, and in severe cases, pulmonary, infectious disease and critical care specialists should be consulted.

Ask the patient what type of product they use if an e-cigarette product is suspected as a possible etiology as well as if the patient is:

- Using commercially available devices and/or liquids (i.e. bottles, cartridges or pods);
- Sharing e-cigarette products (devices, liquids, refill pods and/or cartridges) with other people;
- Re-using old cartridges or pods (with homemade or commercially bought products); or heating the drug to concentrate it and then using a specific type of device to inhale the product (i.e., “dabbing”).

Ask patients about any retained product, including devices and liquids, to determine if anything is available for testing if needed.

BACKGROUND

Washington State Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are aware that as of August 14, 2019, 30 cases of severe pulmonary disease have been reported to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS). Using a case definition drafted by DHS, 15 cases are confirmed (ages 16-34 years) and 15 cases are still under investigation (ages 16-53 years). Patients presented with respiratory symptoms including cough, shortness of breath, and fatigue. Symptoms worsened over a period of days or weeks before admission to the hospital. Other symptoms reported by some patients included fever, chest pain, weight loss, nausea, and diarrhea. Chest radiographs showed bilateral opacities, and CT imaging of the chest demonstrated diffuse ground-glass opacities, often with sub-pleural sparing. Evaluation for infectious etiologies was negative among nearly all patients.

Some patients experienced progressive respiratory compromise requiring mechanical ventilation but subsequently improved with corticosteroids. All patients reported “vaping” (i.e., use of e-cigarette devices to aerosolize substances for inhalation) in the weeks and months prior to hospital admission. Many have acknowledged recent use of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)-containing products however, no specific product has been identified by all cases, nor has any product been conclusively linked to this clinical syndrome. The Health Department

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE UPDATE

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION SECTION
 THURSTON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
 412 LILLY RD NE
 OLYMPIA, WA, 98506-5132
 DISEASE REPORTING: (360)786-5470 INFORMATION: (360) 867-2533
 Rachel Wood, MD, MPH, Health Officer



8/23/2019

and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration are working to investigate the possible cause of these illnesses by testing patient specimens and vaping products.

Illinois has identified 24 possible cases. Other states such as NY, CA, IN, and UT have also reported possible cases of similar illness. The etiology of this illness is unclear at this time; however, active, state-specific epidemiological investigations are ongoing to better characterize the demographic, clinical, and laboratory features of cases. CDC is actively assisting state health departments with their epidemiological and laboratory investigations by facilitating information sharing between state health departments, providing assistance in the development of data collection tools and health communication materials, and identifying options to facilitate laboratory testing of vaping products and solutions.

Resources:

Wisconsin Department of Health: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/outbreaks/index.htm>

Illinois Department of Health: <http://dph.illinois.gov/news/illinois-department-public-health-warns-hospitalizations-potentially-tied-vaping>

Information on electronic cigarettes and similar devices:
https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/index.htm

For assistance with management of patients suspected of illness related to recreational, illicit, or other drugs: Call your local poison control center at: 1-800-222-1222.

THANK YOU FOR REPORTING!

TO REPORT A NOTIFIABLE CONDITION IN THURSTON COUNTY	
Voice mail for reporting Non-immediately reportable conditions (24 hours a day)	Phone: 360-786-5470 Fax: 360-867-2601
Day time immediately reportable conditions	360-867-2500 ask staff to locate Communicable Disease staff
After hours immediately and 24-hour reportable conditions or a public health emergency	Call 911 and ask staff to locate the Health Officer. If calling from outside Thurston County, call 360-704-2740 and ask staff to locate the Health Officer.
No one is available with Thurston County Public Health and condition is immediately notifiable	1-877-539-4344