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From: Ron Kirschner, MD, Medical Director
To: ALL HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS
Subject: Vaping and lung injury
Date: 8/19/19

- Use of e-cigarette devices or “vaping” as a nicotine delivery system has increased markedly in recent years.
- Originally intended to help older adults quit smoking, vaping has become common among adolescents who never had a smoking habit.
- Vaping solutions contain nicotine (in some cases THC) as well as propylene or vegetable-derived glycols, flavoring/coloring agents, and other additives.
- In recent weeks we have heard from our toxicology colleagues around the country about dozens of young healthy individuals in multiple states hospitalized with acute lung injury after vaping.
- As far as we know there have been no fatalities, but some of these patients have been critically ill, requiring endotracheal intubation with mechanical ventilation, and ICU admission.
- Thus far, no single vaping device or liquid has been linked to these respiratory illnesses.
- The cause of the respiratory compromise cases remains unclear. They may be related to unidentified contaminants or adulterants in the vaping products.
- If you encounter a patient with unexplained respiratory decompensation, please inquire about recent vaping, try to identify the specific product, and if available consider holding the product for possible analysis by a specialized reference lab.
- Please report all suspected cases to the Poison Center or your public health department.

References

- 1) Stobbe M. Doctors suspect vaping behind dozens of lung illnesses in US. <https://www.apnews.com/c676b5988fa14ab59f724077fc5cd7c9>
- 2) Nedelman M. Minnesota is the latest state to report patients with severe lung disease after vaping, 8/5/19. <https://www.cnn.com/2019/08/14/health/vaping-lung-disease-minnesota/index.html>
- 3) CDC Clinical Outreach and Communication, <https://emergency.cdc.gov/newsletters/coca/081619.html>

Our nurse and pharmacist certified specialists in poison information and physician toxicologists are available 24 hours a day to answer your questions.