



HEALTH ALERT

September 9, 2019

Topic: Pulmonary Disease Associated with Electronic Cigarettes (e-cigarettes)

Dear Colleagues,

As of last Friday (September 6, 2019) thirty-three states have reported more than 450 cases of severe pulmonary disease associated with the use of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes), including three deaths. The CDC is currently coordinating a multistate investigation of this disease and, based on available information, it appears that the disease is likely caused by a chemical exposure associated with “vaping”, although no single causative product or substance has been identified.

Respiratory symptoms have included nonproductive cough, pleuritic chest pain and shortness of breath, and have occurred over a period of several days to weeks. Systemic symptoms have also been reported including tachycardia, chills, fever and fatigue, as well as gastrointestinal symptoms of nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain and diarrhea.

Additional information, including the scope and clinical findings of this illness, may be found as follows:

1. The New England Journal of Medicine –
“Pulmonary Illness Related to E-Cigarette Use in Illinois and Wisconsin — Preliminary Report”
<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa1911614>
2. MMWR –
“Severe Pulmonary Disease Associated with Electronic-Cigarette–Product Use — Interim Guidance”
https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/mm6836e2.htm?s_cid=mm6836e2_w

As clinicians you are encouraged to consider e-cigarette-associated pulmonary disease in the differential diagnosis of patients presenting with respiratory symptoms and a history of using e-cigarette products. In the event that you have questions, particularly if you suspect that you may have a patient with this disease, please contact me at 616-494-5548. You may also contact the Ottawa County Department of Public Health at 616-396-5266 and ask for the Communicable Disease section.

Sincerely,

Paul A. Heidel, MD, MPH
Medical Director
Ottawa County Department of Public Health