



Clinton County Health Department

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"Working Together for a Healthier Community"

www.clintonhealth.org



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Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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News Release

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Vaping-Associated Pulmonary Illness

September 6, 2019, Plattsburgh. Clinton County Health Department wants to insure that local residents are aware of dangers that have been linked to vaping. Vaping is defined as the use of an electronic delivery system to inhale nicotine or other substances.

On September 5, 2019 the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) released a statement about their ongoing investigation into 34 cases of serious vaping-associated pulmonary illness in New York State (https://www.health.ny.gov/press/releases/2019/2019-09-05_vaping.htm). The State's investigation parallels a wider investigation by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) into 450 possible cases across the Nation including three deaths.

The release from NYSDOH quotes Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker saying, "The cases of pulmonary illnesses associated with vaping are continuing to rise across New York State and the country. We urge the public to be vigilant about any vaping products that they or any family members may be using and to immediately contact their health care provider if they develop any unusual symptoms. In general, vaping of unknown substances is dangerous, and we continue to explore all options to combat this public health issue."

The NYSDOH has received reports of severe pulmonary illness among patients ranging from 15 to 46 years of age. All patients were using at least one cannabis-containing vape product before they became ill, however, all patients reported recent use of various vape products. The investigation has uncovered high levels of Vitamin E acetate in nearly all of the cannabis-containing samples analyzed. In the New York State investigation, at least one Vitamin E acetate containing vape product has been linked to each patient who submitted a product for testing. However, the CDC investigation being conducted with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), has not identified a single common substance.

Karen Derusha, Supervising Public Health Educator at the Clinton County Health Department had this to say, "The increasing use of vape products, also known as e-cigarettes, especially among youth, is a concern for local health advocates. Many people see e-cigarettes as a safer alternative to traditional tobacco use. This attitude is leading to a new generation of young people addicted to nicotine and also exposed to the health harms associated with these products."

The release from NYSDOH states that testing of both cannabis and nicotine-containing vape products is part of this investigation. Vitamin E acetate is not an approved additive for New York State Medical Marijuana Program-authorized vape products. It advised that, "Anyone using vape products should never use unregulated products purchased 'off the street.' Cannabis-containing products are not legally available in New York State for recreational use. These unregulated products are not tested and may contain harmful substances. Users of vape products should never modify vape products or add any substances to these products that are not intended by the manufacturer."

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“This new threat of severe respiratory illness linked to vaping highlights how much is still unknown about the use of electronic devices to deliver nicotine or other substances to the bloodstream via the lungs.” states Ms. Derusha. “As we have learned from traditional tobacco use, inhaling foreign substances into the lungs can have devastating health consequences.”

CCHD advises those using any vaping products to cease. Parents are encouraged to educate themselves about the health hazards associated with vaping and share information about vaping-associated pulmonary illness with their children. CCHD further advises school personnel to become familiar with the variety of available vaping devices and to develop strong policies that include not only disciplinary action but also referral for cessation services. Health care providers are reminded to ask specifically about vaping when determining a patient’s tobacco use history.

Symptoms of vaping-associated pulmonary illness include: cough, shortness of breath, chest pain, fever, headache, fatigue, nausea, diarrhea, anorexia, or weight loss. Residents should consult a health care provider if they are experiencing these symptoms and inform their provider if they have a history of vaping.

Additional information about unexplained vaping-associated pulmonary illness is available at https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/severe-lung-disease.html

For more information about vaping and other tobacco use visit https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/index.htm
<https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/emerging-tobacco-products/e-cigarettes-facts-stats-and-regulations>

About the Clinton County Health Department:

The Health Department is an accredited full service department serving the residents of Clinton County. The Health Department’s Mission is to improve and protect the health, well-being and environment of the people of Clinton County. Visit our website at www.clintonhealth.org or connect with us on Facebook (@clintonhealth), Twitter (@ClintonCountyHD), and Instagram (clintoncountyhealth).

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