



Indiana State Department of Health

Indiana Health Alert Network Notification – Aug. 14, 2019

Severe Respiratory Illness among Indiana Residents who Reported Vaping

The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) has been responding to reports of individuals with severe acute respiratory illness who reported recent vaping or dabbing (vaping marijuana oils, extracts, or concentrates). This follows news from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) and the Illinois Department of Health (IDPH) reporting clusters of severe respiratory illnesses seen in teenagers and young adults who had reported vaping in the weeks and months prior to the onset of illness.

As of Aug., 14, 2019, ISDH is investigating six cases of this syndrome in patients with a history of vaping that are similar to cases reported in other states. The cases range in age from adolescent to adult and are spread out across the state. One of the patients that is under investigation is an out of state resident who was hospitalized in Indiana. This is an ongoing investigation and the ISDH is working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other states responding to reports of similar cases.

Patients experienced respiratory symptoms including:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Fatigue
- Fever

Other symptoms included weight loss, nausea, abdominal pain, and diarrhea. Chest X-ray (CXR) showed bilateral opacities, and chest CT imaging shows diffuse ground glass opacities, often with subpleural sparing. These symptoms worsened over a period of days or weeks before admission to the hospital. All patients were placed on oxygen; no use of mechanical ventilation has been reported in the suspected Indiana cases. Evaluation for infectious etiologies (bacterial, viral, and fungal) were negative in all patients.

The ISDH is requesting that health care providers who are seeing patients with unexpected serious respiratory illness and who report a history of inhalation drug use in the previous 90 days, particularly vaping, report these to their local health department (LHD) as soon as possible. LHDs who are alerted of suspect cases should notify the ISDH immediately.

It is currently unknown what specific vape product(s) or chemicals may be linked to these illnesses, or where they were obtained. If the patient has vape product available and would be willing to submit for testing, please notify the ISDH to work out submission logistics.



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To report suspected cases, submit vape product, or if you have additional questions, please contact Sara Hallyburton, ISDH Respiratory Epidemiologist, at (317) 234-2809, or the ISDH Epidemiologist-on-Call after hours at (317) 233-1325. You may also call the Indiana Poison Center at (800) 222-1222.