

HEALTH ALERT

September 30, 2019

Vaping-Associated Pulmonary Injury – Information for Physicians and Hospitals

The clinical presentation of VAPI can initially mimic common pulmonary diagnoses like pneumonia, but patients typically do not respond to antibiotic therapy. High clinical suspicion is necessary to make the diagnosis of VAPI. In some cases, patients sought care at outpatient clinics in the days prior to hospital presentation and received antibiotics for presumed pneumonia or bronchitis, which did not improve their symptoms.

Action Items for Physicians:

- 1) Ask patients presenting with respiratory complaints in both outpatient and inpatient settings about their use of vaping or “dabbing” devices, especially patients who had an initial diagnosis of pneumonia or bronchitis that did not respond to antibiotics. For patients who do vape, ask these follow-up questions:
 - **Type of vape used**
 - Do you vape nicotine-containing substances?
 - Do you vape substances that contain cannabis or cannabinoid compounds like THC and CBD?
 - **Amount of use**
 - When was the last time you vaped?
 - How often do you vape?
 - How long have you been vaping?
 - **Source**
 - Where do you purchase your vaping supplies?
 - What brands are your vaping devices, cartridges, and oils?
- 2) Report suspected cases to the local health department within one business day.
 - An official from your local health department may interview the patient or family members.
 - The local health department will contact the hospital lab to arrange the transfer of biospecimens remaining from the patient to the public health lab. You do not have to order any specific cultures or tests on blood or urine that you would not normally request for the care of the patient.
 - The local health department may collect vape devices and cartridges from the patient or family for testing.

**To report a suspected case of VAPI, please contact
Humboldt County Public Health
by phone at (707) 268-2182
or by email at cdnurse@co.humboldt.ca.us**

