

DECADES vs DAYS

In 45 days, the cannabis industry can take life-saving, corrective actions that took the U.S. government 45 years to implement.



Vape Crisis Guidance: Patient & Consumer

What Is Known

As of October 17, 2019, the U.S. Center for Disease Control has received reports of 33 deaths and 1,479 lung injury cases associated with the use of e-cigarettes or vaping across 49 states. At this time, FDA and CDC have not identified the cause(s) of the lung injuries in these cases, and the only commonality among all cases is that patients report the use of vaping products. This outbreak might have more than one cause, and many different substances and product sources are still under investigation. The specific chemical exposure(s) causing lung injuries associated with e-cigarette product use, or vaping, remains unknown at this time.

However, even though no cause has been identified, most patients report a history of using products containing cannabis. The latest national and state findings suggest products containing THC, particularly those from the street or other informal sources (e.g. friends, family members, illicit dealers), are linked to most of the cases and play a major role in the outbreak.

What Can Be Done

FOCUS created a list of suggested actions patients and consumers can take immediately to protect themselves until the investigation is completed and a source is identified.

1. Know How To Protect Yourself

- a. While the CDC investigation is ongoing, do buy or use cannabis vape products
- b. Do not buy or use cannabis vape products from the street or black market
- c. Do not buy or use cannabis vape products that contain anything other than THC/CBD oil

2. Make An Informed Decision By Understanding What Vaping Is

- a. Cannabis vaping devices come in many shapes and sizes
- b. Most have a battery, a heating element, and a place to hold the cannabis oil liquid
- c. Vaping devices produce an aerosol by heating the cannabis oil liquid contained inside
- d. The aerosol that is inhaled from the device can contain harmful substances, including:
 - i. Ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs
 - ii. Flavoring such as diacetyl, a chemical linked to a serious lung disease
 - iii. Volatile organic compounds
 - iv. Cancer-causing chemicals
 - v. Heavy metals such as nickel, tin, and lead
- e. Flavorings, colorings and other chemicals added to cannabis vaping products are not regulated by state cannabis programs
- f. Consumers inhale this aerosol into their lungs

3. Recognize The Symptoms

- a. Cough, shortness of breath, or chest pain
- b. Nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, or diarrhea
- c. Fatigue, fever, or weight loss
- d. Some patients have reported their symptoms developed over a few days, while others have reported symptoms developing over several weeks.
- e. A lung infection does not appear to be causing these symptoms

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The Cannabis Health and Safety Organization

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please email info@focusstandards.org or visit www.focusstandards.org

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4. Know Who To Call If You Or Someone You Know Experiences Symptoms:

- a. 911
- b. American Association of Poison Control Centers
 - i. 1-800-222-1222
- c. Center for Disease Control
 - i. <https://wwwn.cdc.gov/dcs/contactus/form>
 - ii. 1-800-232-4636
- d. FDA 24-Hour Emergency Line
 - i. 301-443-1240

5. Report All Product Complaints, Concerns, Symptoms, And Suspicious To The Appropriate Federal And State Agencies

- a. Place of Purchase
- b. State Cannabis Regulatory Authority
- c. State Departments of Public Health
- d. Center for Disease Control
 - i. <https://wwwn.cdc.gov/dcs/contactus/form>
 - ii. 1-800-232-4636
- e. FDA Safety Reporting Portal
 - i. <https://www.safetyreporting.hhs.gov>

6. Learn To Read And Understand A Certificate Of Analysis

7. Talk About It

- a. Be honest with your physician and other healthcare professionals
- b. If you see something, say something
- c. Listen and talk to friends who also use cannabis, share stories, protect one another

About FOCUS (Foundation of Cannabis Unified Standards)

Established in 2014 as The Cannabis Health and Safety Organization, FOCUS is a 501c3 non-profit that addresses the many shortcomings in quality, safety, and consistency that have become evident with the explosive growth of the global cannabis industry. Our primary mission is to protect public health, consumer safety, and safeguard the environment. To that end, we develop and implement cannabis-specific Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) standards and provide third-party certification to address the quality, safety, and consistency issues within the cannabis industry. FOCUS is the first organization to develop cannabis-specific voluntary consensus standards following American National Standards Institute (ANSI) guidelines. FOCUS is not a cannabis company, an industry trade association, or an advocacy organization. FOCUS is an unbiased, third-party with no financial stake in, or funding from, the cannabis industry. FOCUS does not advocate on behalf of, or push, cannabis policy. FOCUS exists to help ensure the rapidly growing global cannabis industry has the necessary protections in place for the health, safety, success, and welfare of everyone. This autonomy fosters a principled, objective organization that protects end users, and acts as the much-needed neutral, nonpartisan bridge between industry and regulatory.



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