



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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State Health Officer Issues Health Advisory and New E-cigarette Report

SACRAMENTO – California Department of Public Health (CDPH) director and state health officer Dr. Ron Chapman today issued a [Health Advisory](#) and the [“State Health Officer’s Report on E-Cigarettes: A Community Health Threat,”](#) warning Californians of the toxicity of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes).

“E-cigarettes contain nicotine and other harmful chemicals, and the nicotine in them is as addictive as the nicotine in cigarettes,” said Chapman. “There is a lot of misinformation about e-cigarettes. That is why, as the state’s health officer, I am advising Californians to avoid the use of e-cigarettes and keep them away from children of all ages.”

E-cigarettes are battery operated devices, often designed to resemble cigarettes that deliver a nicotine-containing aerosol. E-cigarettes have many names, especially among youth and young adults, such as e-cigs, e-hookahs, vape pens, vape pipes or mods. The liquid solution (e-liquid) used in e-cigarettes typically contains nicotine and is commonly referred to as “e-juice.” It is sold in a variety of candy, fruit and alcohol flavors.

Studies find a significant rise in e-cigarette use each year, especially among young adults and teens. New California data shows that e-cigarette use among young adults, ages 18 – 29, increased from 2.3 percent in 2012 to 7.6 percent in 2013. Young adults in California are three times more likely to use e-cigarettes than those 30 and older. Likewise, e-cigarette use among U.S. teens has surged. In 2014, teen use of e-cigarettes nationally surpassed the use of traditional cigarettes, with more than twice as many 8th and 10th graders reporting using e-cigarettes more than traditional cigarettes. Among 12th graders, 17 percent reported currently using e-cigarettes vs. 14 percent using traditional cigarettes.

Along with an increase in use, there has been a spike in calls to the California poison control centers related to exposures to nicotine-containing e-liquids and accidental e-cigarette poisonings – from 19 in 2012 to 243 in 2014. More than 60 percent of all those e-cigarette related calls involve children 5 years and under.

“The e-cigarette cartridges and e-liquid bottles are not equipped with child-resistant caps, often leak, creating a poisoning risk by ingestion or by skin or eye contact,” warned Dr. Chapman. “These products are not safe.”

Highlights of the report include:

- Exposure to nicotine during adolescence can harm brain development.
- E-cigarettes do not emit a harmless water vapor, but an aerosol that has been found to contain at least 10 chemicals that are on California's Proposition 65 list of chemicals known to cause cancer, birth defects or other reproductive harm.
- E-cigarettes are not FDA-approved cessation aids.
- Between 2011 and 2013, e-cigarette advertising jumped more than 1,200 percent and used marketing tactics to appeal to youth. Those tactics include the use of cartoon characters which is prohibited in traditional cigarette advertising.

Chapman also announced that the public education and media efforts to counter e-cigarettes are just beginning. CDPH intends to partner with health, medical, child care and education communities to educate consumers about the dangers of e-cigarettes, and plans an advertising campaign in the near future.

The California Tobacco Control Program was established by the Tobacco Tax and Health Protection Act of 1988. The act, approved by California voters, instituted a 25-cent tax on each pack of cigarettes and earmarked five cents of that tax to fund California's tobacco control efforts. These efforts include supporting local health departments and community organizations, a media campaign, and evaluation and surveillance. California's comprehensive approach has changed social norms around tobacco use and secondhand smoke. It is estimated California's tobacco control efforts have saved more than one million lives and have resulted in \$134 billion worth of savings in health care costs. Learn more at TobaccoFreeCA.

www.cdph.ca.gov

