

**Tobacco Prevention Program**

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**Public Health**   
Seattle & King County

*October 7, 2019*

Dear Partner,

As you may have heard, there has been an outbreak of lung disease associated with the use of e-cigarette products across the country, including several confirmed in Washington state. We share your concern about this latest outbreak and are reaching out with some information for sharing with your communities.

In this document, you will find:

- I. Background information on the current outbreak
- II. What you need to know about e-cigarettes
- III. Resources for youth
- IV. Resources for adults
- V. Attachments: (a) Template letter to send to parents (b) Tip sheet for parents (c) Frequently Asked Questions (d) Infographic with key information

Please reach out by emailing [Norilyn.DelaPena@kingcounty.gov](mailto:Norilyn.DelaPena@kingcounty.gov) to request additional support you may need.

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## I. Background on vaping-related illness

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The Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and state and local health departments are [investigating cases](#) of individuals who have developed severe lung illness associated with using e-cigarettes, or “vaping.” Across the United States, there have been over one thousand cases.

Investigations are ongoing. **For the latest information** on the national outbreak visit [CDC’s page](#).

### Causes of Vaping-Associated Lung Illness

The specific cause of these vaping-associated illnesses is not known and has not been definitively linked to any particular device, substance, or brand. People who became ill reported using a range of products, including both cannabis-derived products with THC or CBD, and nicotine-containing products. Some have reported the use of e-cigarette products containing only nicotine.

Of the confirmed and probable cases that have been reported to the CDC to date:

- All report vaping within 90 days of illness (which is part of the case definition)
- Most cases are patients under 35 years old
- A majority report vaping THC products, though some report vaping only nicotine products; some report vaping a combination of both

### Symptoms of Vaping-Associated Lung Illness

Symptoms can include shortness of breath, chest pain, fever, chills, vomiting, abdominal pain, fever, nausea or fatigue. If you use e-cigarette products and experience any of these symptoms, promptly seek medical attention.

### Recommendations:

- E-cigarettes and vaping are not safe. Everyone should be aware of the risk for severe lung disease and avoid using e-cigarettes and vaping until the cause of this outbreak is known.
- Youth, young adults, pregnant women, as well as adults who do not currently use tobacco products should not use e-cigarettes.
- Anyone who uses e-cigarette products should not buy these products off the street and should not modify e-cigarette products or add any substances that are

not intended by the manufacturer, including THC products and other cannabinoids.

- Promptly seek medical attention if you use e-cigarette products and experience symptoms of coughing, shortness of breath, chest pain, nausea or fatigue.
- Report any cases to local health or state department of health.
- If you want to stop using e-cigarettes, or any tobacco product, you can contact your doctor or call the Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW: Trained professionals will help you set up a quit plan, provide quit help information, and provide nicotine replacement if eligible.
- If you are concerned about harmful effects from e-cigarette products, call WA Poison Control Center at: 1-800-222-1222.

**Additional information** from Public Health – Seattle & King County and Washington State Department of Health:

[Blog post](#) from Public Health – Seattle & King County on the First Case of Vaping-Related Lung Illness Confirmed in King County

[One pager](#) on youth vapor product use in King County

[News release](#) from Washington State Department of Health

[Press conference](#) through Facebook Live with Washington State Department of Health and Public Health – Seattle & King County (September 11, 2019)

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## II. What you need to know about e-cigarettes and vaping

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Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) are battery-powered devices that can deliver nicotine and flavorings to the user in the form of an aerosol. E-cigarettes come in many shapes and sizes.

Vaping is the act of inhaling aerosolized liquid from a device, sometimes called a vape pen or an e-cigarette. The device is filled with vape liquid and when it heats up, the liquid is aerosolized into millions of tiny droplets and then inhaled.

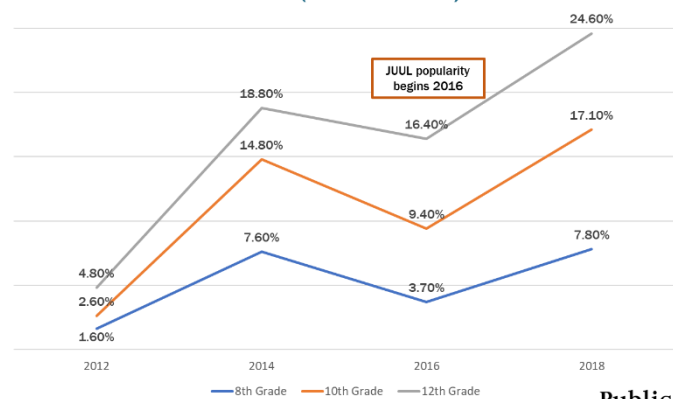
- Most popular vapor products are pod-based units like JUUL that contain extremely high levels of nicotine; one JUUL pod has as much nicotine as a pack of 20 cigarettes.
- Virtually all e-cigarette products contain nicotine and emit numerous potentially toxic substances (flavors and heavy metals).

- Youth are especially vulnerable to the harmful and addictive effects of nicotine; early nicotine addiction can harm brain development and nerve cell functioning.
- A growing number of studies show that young people who use e-cigarettes may be more likely to smoke traditional (combustible) cigarettes in the future.
- Most youth use vapor products because of the availability of flavors and the belief that vaping is harmless.

### E-Cigarette use among youth in King County:

- 1 in 4 high school seniors report vaping in the past 30 days
- 10th grade use increased by 82% between 2016 and 2018
- Nicotine is the most common substance used when vaping
- Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) youth have significantly higher rates of vapor use rates than heterosexual youth

King County youth have increasing rates of vapor use (2012-2018)



For more information including resources and curriculum for teachers and tools to quit smoking visit Public Health's [Tobacco and Vaping Prevention webpage](#).




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### III. Resources for youth

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Learn about vaping at [www.escapethevape.org](http://www.escapethevape.org) or the [Don't be Fooled Campaign](#)

Ready to stop vaping or smoking?

- **Download** the free Quitstart app helps youth quit with tailored tips and inspiration: <https://teen.smokefree.gov/become-smokefree/quitstart-app>
- **Text** DITCHJUUL to 887-09
- **Call the Quitline** youth program at 1-800-QUIT-NOW

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### IV. Resources for adults

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Learn about the public health effects of e-cigarettes from the [National Academy of Medicine's report](#).

If you want to stop using e-cigarette or any tobacco product:

- **Call the Quitline** at 1-800-QUIT-NOW or **visit** their [website](#). Trained professionals will help you set up a quit plan, provide quit help information, and provide nicotine replacement if eligible.
- **Attend a support group** available at St. Francis, Federal Way by calling Heidi Henson, 253-223-7538
- **Call the [Asian smokers Quitline](#)** for telephone support in Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean and Vietnamese
- For Spanish support **call [DÉJELO-YA](#)** at 1-855-335-3569