

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: COVID-19, Vaping and Associated Lung Injury Cases

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the new coronavirus that causes the disease COVID-19 is from a family of viruses that causes respiratory infections. That's why people with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma are among individuals at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

This also means that people who engage in behavior that affects their lungs — including smoking and vaping are also at a higher risk of complications if they contract the disease. The CDC has found that 20% of patients sick enough to be hospitalized are ages 20 to 44, and some health authorities are speculating whether there is a connection between this age group's hospitalization rate and the high rate of vaping among this same cohort. Vaping itself can lead to inflammation and profound lung disease, as well as to a malfunction of the immune system in the lungs. Those who vape or smoke may be more susceptible to pulmonary complications following a COVID-19 infection.

COVID-19 can damage the lining of the air sacs in the lungs (alveoli) where oxygen is delivered to the blood. As those sacs fill with fluid, dead cells, and other debris, it prevents oxygen from getting through. The filling up of the air sacs is what causes the typical white appearance of the lungs on a chest X-ray or CT scan of a patient with COVID-19 pneumonia. The air sacs normally are full of air and appear black on radiographic studies. When the lungs have to work harder or when there is decreased oxygen supply to other body organs, more stress is placed on those organs, and they are more susceptible to failure.

Vaping can cause EVALI (e-cigarette or vaping associated lung injury), a broad descriptor of acute respiratory illness. It generally can manifest with shortness of breath, cough, and rapid and shallow breathing. Studies evaluating the pathological changes in the lungs of people who vape have described acute inflammation, damage to the air sacs that are necessary for oxygen exchange, and focal spots of pneumonia. All these changes may induce a chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)-like illness. COVID-19 may amplify any of these changes.

In terms of Vaping, there is little research on how vaping habits among young people Right now are directly connected to COVID-19 however hospitals across the country are seeing younger patients who are sick, some of them requiring intubation and ventilation. One theory is that it is more likely that younger people were slower to take up social distancing and to self-isolate when they had early symptoms. Once the initial surge of COVID 19 is passed, researchers will have a better chance to look closely at the data to determine whether those patients who needed intubation had a history of smoking or vaping or of other underlying lung disease.

Researchers maintain it is clear that vaping may increase nicotine addiction, is strongly associated with acute lung injury, and potentially causes cancer down the road. The CDC cautions against vaping during COVID-19 and encourages individuals to quit altogether.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is a federal agency that conducts and supports health promotion, prevention and preparedness activities in the United States, with the goal of improving overall public health. To learn more about the CDC please visit www.cdc.gov.

The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition is conducting an opioid prevention awareness campaign entitled. "Keeping Glen Cove SAFE," in order to educate and update the community regarding opioid use and its consequences. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE's website to learn more about Vaping and COVID-19 Epidemics at www.safeglencove.org.

