

# GALVESTON COUNTY HEALTH DISTRICT

*Protecting and Promoting the Optimal Health and Well-Being of Galveston County*

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## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **GCHD reports two new cases of e-cigarette related lung injury in county**

GALVESTON COUNTY, Texas – Two Galveston County men, one ranging in age 30-35 years and the other 20-25, have been diagnosed with lung injury associated with e-cigarette use, or vaping.

These new cases bring Galveston County's total to three since the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) began its investigation. Last month, Galveston County Health District (GCHD) confirmed a man, ranging in age 18-22 years, had been diagnosed with lung injury. The three men were hospitalized, treated and discharged.

These cases fit the profile of the current multi-state outbreak of severe pulmonary disease associated with the use of e-cigarette products.

As of Oct. 8, 1,299 lung injury cases associated with using e-cigarette, or vaping, products have been reported to the CDC from 49 states. Twenty-six deaths have been confirmed.

"This is a serious situation. These are life-threatening illnesses even for those who are otherwise completely healthy," said Dr. Philip Keiser, Galveston County local health authority.

All patients have reported a history of using e-cigarette products including devices, liquids, refill pods and/ or cartridges. E-cigarettes are devices that deliver an aerosol to the user by heating a liquid that usually contains nicotine, flavorings and other chemicals. It can also be used to deliver marijuana and other substances.

Most patients report a history of using THC-containing products and the CDC reports the latest national and regional findings suggest products containing THC play a role in the outbreak.

Approximately 70 percent of reported patients are male, according to the CDC. Roughly 80 percent are younger than 35 years old with 15 percent younger than 18 years and 21 percent between 18-20 years old.

"Youth and young adults should not be using e-cigarette products. Parents need to have this conversation with their children," Keiser said. "Parents may not even realize their child is using these products. E-cigarette devices come in all shapes and sizes and can look like a pen, a USB stick and other everyday items. They are filled with volatile organic compounds, nicotine and other chemicals that are just not safe for any age."

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Patients in this investigation have reported symptoms including cough, shortness of breath or diarrhea, fatigue, fever or weight loss. Some patients have reported their symptoms developed over a few days while others have reported their symptoms developed over several weeks.

“We still don’t know what is specifically causing these illnesses,” Keiser said. “The CDC has not linked one single product or substance to all reported lung injury cases. With that said, we are recommending you consider not using e-cigarette, or vaping, products, particularly those containing THC.”

While this investigation is ongoing, those concerned about these specific health risks should consider not using e-cigarette products. Those who do use e-cigarette products should seek medical care promptly if they experience symptoms.

Regardless of the ongoing investigation, the CDC advises:

- Youth and young adults should not use e-cigarette products.
- Women who are pregnant should not use e-cigarette products.
- Adults who do not currently use tobacco products should not start using e-cigarette products.
- If you do use e-cigarette products, you should not buy these products off the street (for example, e-cigarette products with THC or other cannabinoids).
- You should not modify e-cigarette products or add any substances to these products that are not intended by the manufacturer.
- Adult smokers who are attempting to quit should use evidence-based treatments, including counseling and FDA-approved medications. If you need help quitting tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, contact your doctor or other medical provider.

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*The Galveston County Health District (GCHD) is the local public health agency for Galveston County, Texas. GCHD provides services and programs that protect the everyday health and well-being of Galveston County.*

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