

THC related lung injuries in the USA

Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is the active ingredient that makes people get “high” when they smoke cannabis. In the USA, where cannabis smoking has been legalised in some States, there has been a growing trend of vaping with e-liquids that contain THC. Subsequently illicit THC e-liquid products became available on the “black market”, and in some US States in 2019, some of these unfortunately included a thickening agent known as vitamin E acetate. Commonly used in cosmetics, and completely safe applied to skin, vitamin E acetate is absolutely unsuitable for vaping. Its use in THC e-liquids has resulted lung injury for over two thousand people, and 54 deaths in the USA as of 17th December 2019.ⁱ

Such injuries were not found in the rest of the world, despite widespread use of nicotine e-cigarettes since 2010. **This is because the injuries are not related to vaping, the means of delivery, but to illicit THC e-liquid, the product that is being delivered.** Most media articles fail to make this distinction clearly. Thickening agents such as vitamin E acetate cannot be used in nicotine e-liquids, but if they could their inclusion is prohibited in any legitimate products in the UK and Europe. **All IBVTA manufacturer members have committed only to produce e-liquid legitimately and responsibly, meaning that events such as those in the USA in 2019 cannot and will not occur for their customers.**

i. Blount et al. Vitamin E Acetate in Bronchoalveolar-Lavage Fluid Associated with EVALI. *N Engl J Med.* 2019; 10.1056/NEJMoa1916433.

Welcome to the Independent British Vape Trade Association (IBVTA)

The IBVTA is aware of a number of newspaper articles and other reports that produce “evidence” that appears to counter the facts as stated in this leaflet, including publications by international government agencies. The IBVTA believes these agencies and publications to be acting irresponsibly in presenting these views, which are quite frankly not supportable. A concise (but not short) explanation of the reality of the situation can be found at: filtermag.org/vaping-arguments-health

All IBVTA members are entirely free of any ownership or control by the tobacco and pharmaceutical industries, and have no interest beyond making products that help adult smokers to quit.

If you would like any further information, or you would like to be put in touch with an IBVTA member business that can help with any quit smoking projects, small or large, please visit our website, www.ibvta.org.uk or contact us via the address, email or phone number below.



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Vaping Saves Lives



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Vaping Saves Lives

Despite the occasional barrage of newspaper headlines alluding or directly reporting to the contrary, the facts as seen by the overwhelming majority of credible medical and scientific researchers are as follows...

1. Vaping is much, much safer than smoking.

Vaping legitimately and responsibly produced nicotine containing products is at very worst 5% as harmful as smoking. It is expected to be found to be very much less harmful than this conservative estimate when long term epidemiological evidence can be evaluated. This view is supported by Public Health England, the Royal College of Physicians and a number of reports in the most reputable scientific journals.^{i,ii,iii}

2. Vaping is the most effective aid to quitting smoking ever known.

Smoking is the worlds' greatest cause of unnecessary death and disease, taking 78,000 lives every year in the UK alone, and is responsible for almost half a million UK hospital admissions in the same period.^{iv} Vaping has been found to help more smokers to quit than any medical intervention, and although the majority of people that have quit using vaping have gone it alone, it is particularly effective when used with behavioural support from trained smoking cessation advisors.^v

3. E-liquid flavours are important to vapers.

Contrary to many media and US government reports, vape businesses do not manufacture and market flavoured e-liquids to make vaping more attractive to young people, but to make vaping attractive to adult smokers. The vast majority of smokers that have stopped smoking completely through vaping have done so using flavours other than tobacco, as flavours are an important part of the alternative experience.^{vi}

4. Vaping is not a gateway to smoking for young people.

Reports of vaping by young people in the USA allude to a youth vaping "epidemic", but this is now known not to be the case. Some young people experiment with vaping occasionally, but long-term regular use is almost entirely confined to those that had already taken up smoking. If there is a gateway, it is leading young people away from tobacco consumption, rather than towards it.^{vii}

Don't just take the IBVTA's word for all this...

Below are a number of articles from credible publications that support each of the four statements above.

References

- i. Vaping in England: an evidence update February 2019 (Public Health England)
- ii. Shahab *et al.* Nicotine, Carcinogen, and Toxin Exposure in Long-Term E-Cigarette and Nicotine Replacement Therapy Users: A Cross-sectional Study. *Ann Intern Med.* 2017; 166(6):390-400.
- iii. Polosa *et al.* Health impact of E-cigarettes: a prospective 3.5-year study of regular daily users who have never smoked. *Sci Rep* 7. 13825, 2017.
- iv. www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistics-on-smoking-england-2017
- v. Hajek *et al.* A Randomized Trial of E-Cigarettes versus Nicotine-Replacement Therapy. *N Engl J Med.* 2019; 380:629-637.
- vi. Nicksic *et al.* Reasons to use e-cigarettes among adults and youth in the Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health (PATH) study. *Addict Behav.* 2019; 93:93-99.
- vii. Jarvis *et al.* Epidemic of youth nicotine addiction? What does the National Youth Tobacco Survey reveal about high school e-cigarette use in the USA? doi.org/10.32388/745076.3