
NEWS RELEASE

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North Dakota Department of Health Warns Against E-cigarette Dangers After Recent Nicotine Poisoning Incident

BISMARCK, N.D. – A recent case of nicotine poisoning involving an administrator from Jamestown High School is underscoring the rapidly growing popularity of electronic nicotine delivery systems (e-cigarettes) among North Dakota youth, as well as the dangers associated with them.

North Dakota teens are using e-cigarettes, deemed tobacco products by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), at an alarmingly high rate. According to the 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 20.6 percent of North Dakota High School students are currently using e-cigarette products. For the first time, research shows more young people in the state are willing to try e-cigarettes, even if they have never tried traditional tobacco cigarettes. This increase may be due, in part, to the common misconception that e-cigarettes are safe, or a safer alternative to traditional tobacco.

Reasons e-cigarettes are harmful

- The sweet and candy-like flavoring used in many e-cigarette products is identified as one of the top three reasons students and young people begin using them.
- There is currently no FDA regulation over the flavors in e-cigarettes.
- Dartmouth College's Norris Cotton Cancer Center researchers found vaping led more people to start a traditional smoking habit rather than avoid or quit in favor of e-cigarettes.

- The developing brains of children are particularly susceptible to nicotine’s highly-addictive nature, priming the brain to be more likely to develop addictive tendencies.
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill researchers found e-cigarette use can trigger immune responses that can lead to lung disease.
- A chemical found in many e-cigarette liquids can cause a condition known as “popcorn lung,” a scarring of the tiny air sacs in the lungs resulting in the thickening and narrowing of airways.

It’s not only users of e-cigarettes who are at risk. Exposure to e-liquid can cause nicotine poisoning, which has been known to cause vomiting, increased heart rate, respiratory issues, impaired motor function and death. Symptoms can be experienced either through ingestion or skin contact. Poison prevention experts in North Dakota urge parents to be vigilant about containers of liquid nicotine in the home, as the toxic chemical can be most harmful to pets and young children. For more information about nicotine poisoning, please call the Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222.

The North Dakota Tobacco Prevention and Control Program encourages families to discuss the dangers associated with e-cigarette products, especially with teens and young adults. For more information on youth smoking rates and approved and effective forms of tobacco cessation, visit the NDQuits website at www.ndhealth.gov/ndquits.

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