

# 5 Things You Need to Know about Vaping

In light of recent illnesses and deaths, people are again asking a lot of questions about the safety of e-cigarettes and vaping.

E-cigarettes in various forms have been growing in popularity for years now. People tend to think of them as safer, more convenient, and less intrusive than cigarette smoking, which has helped to fuel their spread. Recently, however, some injuries and deaths related to lung inflammation and even lung infections have increased the intensity of the spotlight on the industry.

To help determine the health risks about vaping, we gave [Dr. Mehdi Mirsaeidi](#), an expert in pulmonology and critical care medicine with the University of Miami Health System, a call. Dr. Mirsaeidi is conducting ongoing research on the topic of e-cigarettes and vaping and has several published studies on the subject. Here's what Dr. Mirsaeidi had to say.

## #1: The risks related to vaping are real

One only has to look at the numbers to realize that something unusual is going on with electronic cigarettes. According to figures published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in October 2019, 1,299 cases of lung injury and 26 deaths can be linked to e-cigarettes or vapor smoke.

Dr. Mirsaeidi says this matches up with what his research is showing. "Our studies have shown that e-cigarette vapor creates a significant inflammatory response in the lungs," he says. "With that inflammation, the amount of bacteria in the lungs increase, as well, which leads to infection."

## **#2: E-cigarettes are dangerous, even without the additives**

Currently, most of the infections and deaths have been tied to vaping products with THC or added flavors, says Dr. Mirsaeidi. And while he says that these additives do increase the risks related to vaping, the reality is that this shouldn't overshadow the dangers associated with vaping without added flavors or ingredients. "While it's true that flavors can cause damage in the lungs, vaping by itself causes plenty of damage," says Dr. Mirsaeidi. "This is why we don't recommend it in any way, shape or form."

## **#3: E-cigarettes are not a safe alternative to cigarettes**

One factor that has driven the growth of e-cigarettes is the perception that they're less dangerous than regular cigarettes. "One way I pose it to my patients is, 'Would you rather be killed by a knife or a bullet?'" says Dr. Mirsaeidi. "They're both dangerous, and they both cause significant lung damage. I would say that e-cigarettes are absolutely not a safe alternative to cigarettes."

## **#4: E-cigarette use continues to grow**

Despite all these facts, what's perhaps most alarming is how much e-cigarette use continues to expand, particularly among young people. According to the US Surgeon General's office, almost 20% of high school students use e-cigarettes, as well as 4% of middle school students. In fact, the number of high school students who use e-cigarettes is now higher than those who use regular cigarettes.

## #5: The jury is still out on secondhand vaping



When it comes to cigarettes, the risks related to secondhand smoke, or the exposure of those who are simply around smokers, are well-known. With their lack of odor or visible smoke, e-cigarettes have often been considered safe in that regard. But the renewed concern about the safety of e-cigarettes has also resurfaced questions about secondhand vape exposure. The reality, notes, Dr. Mirsaeidi, is that more research is still needed in this area to truly determine what dangers may be related to secondhand e-cigarette exposure.

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