



SMOKING, VAPING & COVID-19: WHAT ARE HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS AND EXPERTS SAYING?

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

“Being a current or former cigarette smoker **can make you more likely** to get severely ill from COVID-19. If you currently smoke, quit. If you used to smoke, don’t start again. If you’ve never smoked, don’t start.” ([“Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) – People with Certain Medical Conditions,” CDC, Apr. 29, 2021](#))

“We also know that tobacco smoking can increase the risk for developing lung disease, making it harder to recover from lung diseases or infections such as COVID-19. And so we do encourage you to have your patients quit smoking or think about that, and they can call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visit the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/quit> for help or more information about that.” ([Dr. Georgina Peacock, “COVID-19 Response At Risk Task Force Lead, CDC, Underlying Medical Conditions and People at Higher Risk for Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\),” CDC Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity \(COCA\) Call, Mar. 27, 2020](#))

Dr. Nora Volkow, Director of the U.S. National Institute on Drug Abuse

“Because it attacks the lungs, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 could be an especially serious threat to those who smoke tobacco or marijuana or who vape. ...

Thus far, deaths and serious illness from COVID-19 seem concentrated to those who are older and who have underlying health issues, such as diabetes, cancer, and respiratory conditions. It is therefore reasonable to be concerned that compromised lung function or lung disease related to smoking history, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), could put people at risk for serious complications of COVID-19. ...

Vaping, like smoking, may also harm lung health. Whether it can lead to COPD is still unknown, but emerging evidence suggests that exposure to aerosols from e-cigarettes harms the cells of the lung and diminishes the ability to respond to infection.” ([COVID-19: Potential Implications for Individuals with Substance Use Disorders – NIDA, Mar. 24, 2020](#))

“Much is still unknown, but it can be expected that persons who smoke, vape, or use certain drugs will be at increased risk for infection and its more severe consequences...”

([Dr. Nora Volkow, “Collision of the COVID-19 and Addiction Epidemics,” Annals of Internal Medicine, Apr. 2, 2020](#))

U.S. Food and Drug Administration

“Data shows that when compared to never smokers, cigarette smoking increases the risk of more severe illness from COVID-19, which could result in hospitalization, the need for intensive care, or even death. Smoking cigarettes can cause inflammation and cell damage throughout the body, and can weaken your immune system, making it less able to fight off disease.” ([Health Effects of Tobacco Use,” U.S. Food & Drug Administration, Aug. 10, 2021](#))

World Health Organization

“Smoking worsens COVID-19 outcomes. Current evidence indicates that smokers (current and former) are more likely to suffer more severe outcomes of COVID-19. Multiple systematic reviews and meta-analyses conducted on this issue provide evidence of a direct association between cigarette smoking and COVID-19 severity, with smokers having a substantially

increased risk of COVID-19 progression and death compared to non-smokers. Furthermore, severe forms of COVID-19 or deaths due to COVID-19 are more frequent in people with comorbidities related to tobacco use, including COPD, lung cancer, and cardiovascular diseases.” ([“WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2021: Addressing new and emerging products,” World Health Organization, Jul. 27, 2021](#))

“Smoking damages your lungs and other parts of your body, and it makes you more vulnerable to [#COVID19](#) infection. It is the right time to quit smoking for a safer and better health.” ([@WHO, Twitter, Apr. 22, 2020](#))

Dr. Jerome Adams, Former U.S. Surgeon General

“Right now, in this moment, it is your day to quit smoking. [@CNN](#) shares how your lungs can make noticeable improvements in the days/weeks after quitting, giving you the edge to fight [#coronavirus](#) if you do become ill. [#COVID19](#)” ([@Surgeon General, Twitter, Apr. 4, 2020](#))

“Give your lungs the best chance at fighting not only [#COVID19](#), but all respiratory diseases. Quit smoking today by calling 1-800-QUIT-NOW. As my [#CessationSGR](#) details, you’ll experience immediate benefits.” ([@Surgeon General, Twitter, Apr. 4, 2020](#))

Dr. Tom Frieden, former Director of U.S. CDC, current President and CEO of Resolve to Save Lives

“People with coronavirus infection and cardiovascular disease, hypertension and diabetes are at least twice as likely to die. Smoking is especially deadly – one study found that smokers have 14 times greater odds of developing COVID-associated pneumonia than non-smokers. ...

Governments can protect heart health by raising taxes on tobacco (we’re going to need the revenue, and tobacco taxes are the single most effective way to encourage smokers to quit) and making all public places smoke-free (so we can go out and breathe air that is free of both coronavirus and cancer-causing smoke!). Currently, 4 out of 10 people in the U.S. aren’t fully protected by smoke-free indoor air policies in all bars, restaurants and worksites. ...

Because people with chronic disease are the most likely to require scarce intensive care beds, and the most likely to die, it’s more urgent than ever that we act, now, to help people quit smoking, be physically active, and get their blood pressure and diabetes under control. And it’s not just for their own sake – all of us will be safer when each of us is healthier.” ([“Former CDC Chief Dr. Tom Frieden: Coronavirus and cardiovascular disease – stopping a deadly duo,” Fox News, Mar. 25, 2020](#))

Albert Rizzo, M.D., Chief Medical Officer, American Lung Association

“Cigarette smoking and vaping are linked to lung inflammation and lowered immune function in the lung’s airways both of which can increase likelihood of complications if exposed to COVID-19. Therefore, long-term smokers and e-cigarette users may have a higher risk of developing chronic lung conditions associated with severe cases.” ([COVID-19: What Those with Lung Disease Should Know – American Lung Association, Mar. 26, 2020](#))

Dr. Stephanie Lovinsky-Desir, Pediatric Pulmonologist, Columbia University

“I have no doubt in saying that smoking and vaping could put people at increased risk of poor outcomes from Covid-19 ... It is quite clear that smoking and vaping are bad for the lungs, and the predominant symptoms of Covid are respiratory. Those two things are going to be bad in combination.” ([“Vaping Links to Covid Risk Are Becoming Clear,” The New York Times, Sept. 4, 2020](#))

Dr. Neal Patel, Pulmonologist and Critical Care Medicine Specialist, Mayo Clinic

“Smoking makes you more susceptible to COVID-19, because it destroys some of your lung’s natural defense mechanisms. Vaping may do the same thing. ... I recommend people stop vaping to maintain lung health and reduce the risk of developing severe disease if they contract COVID-19.” ([What smokers should know about COVID-19 - Mayo Clinic, Mar. 24, 2020](#))

Dr. Joseph E. Ebinger, Cardiologist, Smidt Heart Institute, Cedars-Sinai

“Smokers often have serious heart and lung health problems already. Add COVID-19 to the mix and you are likely to get a very sick patient; they just don’t have the physiological reserves to deal with the massive inflammatory attack brought on by the coronavirus.” ([Does Smoking Increase the Risk of Severe COVID-19 Illness, Cedars Sinai, Sept. 1, 2020](#))

Cleveland Clinic

“As with cigarette smoking, vaping can also compromise the respiratory system. This means that people who smoke or vape are more susceptible to lung infections. According to Dr. Humberto Choi, [a pulmonologist and smoking cessation specialist at the Cleveland Clinic], recent studies have shown that aldehydes and other components found in vaping liquids can impair the immune function of cells found in the airway and lungs.” ([Teens, Vaping and Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Is There a Connection?, Mar. 20, 2020](#))

Massachusetts General Hospital

“Smoking and vaping have harmful effects on the body, including making it harder for the body to fight infections. This includes serious infections like COVID-19 (also called coronavirus). ... Quitting smoking and vaping can help protect you and your family from COVID-19.” ([Smoking, Vaping and COVID-19: About the Connection and How to Quit, Mar 26, 2020](#))

Dr. Stanton A. Glantz, Director of Center for Tobacco Control Research & Education, University of California San Francisco

“When someone’s lungs are exposed to flu or other infections the adverse effects of smoking or vaping are much more serious than among people who do not smoke or vape.” ([Reduce your risk of serious lung disease caused by corona virus by quitting smoking and vaping, Stanton A. Glantz blog, Mar. 29, 2020](#))

Dr. Susan Walley, Chair of the American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Tobacco Control

“Right now, if you need a reason to quit, look no farther than COVID-19.” ([Teens who vape should consider quitting now. Here's how to do it, Mashable, Mar. 23, 2020.](#))

Truth Initiative

“As we confront the coronavirus, it is more important than ever for smokers to quit and for youth and young adults to stop using all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, to protect their health.” ([COVID-19: the connection to smoking and vaping, and resources for quitting, Mar. 24, 2020](#))

Dr. Aaron Bernstein, interim Director of the Center for Climate, Health, and the Global Environment at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

“Given what we know now, it is very likely that people who are exposed to more air pollution and who are smoking tobacco products are going to fare worse if infected with covid than those who are breathing cleaner air, and who don’t smoke.” ([The coronavirus is deadly enough. But some experts suspect bad air makes it worse, The Washington Post, Mar. 15, 2020](#))

Dr. Charles Dela Cruz, Pulmonologist, Critical Care Physician, and Specialist in Respiratory Infections, Yale School of Medicine

“But it is clear that smoking and vaping are bad for the lungs. Patients who smoke and vape can have damaged lungs that make them susceptible to respiratory infections, including COVID-19.” ([“A good time to quit: Smoking and vaping amid COVID-19,” Medical Xpress, Jan. 14, 2021](#))

Dr. Sanjay Gupta, CNN Chief Medical Correspondent

“Young people are not immune from this coronavirus. People between the ages of 20 and 44, they make up 20% of the hospitalizations and we also know that about 20% of people between the ages of 18 and 34 vape so it’s anecdotal at this point, but it does stand to reason that if someone is creating some sort of lung injury as a result of smoking or vaping, and then they get the coronavirus on top of it, it could be a problem.” ([CNN New Day, Mar. 24, 2020](#))

Dr. Alok Patel, Pediatrician, New York-Presbyterian Hospital

“We know that e-cigarettes include chemicals such as propylene glycol, glycerol, and flavorings, and that these chemicals have the ability to go deep into your lungs and cause damage. When people become critically ill from COVID-19, this also involves the deep pockets of their lungs. It’s really scary to think about what could be happening in those that have both of these going on together.” ([“Vaping and e-cigarettes: Adding fuel to the coronavirus fire?,” ABC News, Mar. 26, 2020](#))

Dr. Joanna Cohen, Director of the Institute for Global Tobacco Control, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

“It’s so early in terms of the studies that are being done, but I think it’s certainly a possibility that vaping and inhaling foreign substances into your lungs could make you more susceptible to other lung infections. And I guess what I would suggest is that young people shouldn’t think that they’re immune to COVID-19, particularly if they’re vaping.” ([“Does vaping make you more susceptible to coronavirus?,” CBS News, Mar. 10, 2020](#))

Matt Hancock, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, United Kingdom

“It is abundantly clear from the research into previous coronaviruses that smoking makes the impact of a coronavirus worse.” ([Health Secretary: “It is abundantly clear that smoking makes the impact of a coronavirus worse” – ASH UK, Mar. 18, 2020](#))

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, September 2, 2021