

Delta-8 THC Testimony

Gillian L. Schauer, PhD, MPH

Areas of public health concern

- **Consumer awareness:** Labeling, knowledge of product effects
- **Consumer safety:** Testing, contaminants, byproducts
- **Youth access:** Online markets, hemp markets

Poison Center Reports on Delta-8 Products



FACT SHEET Emerging Public Health Concern: Delta-8 THC

- Delta-8 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is a cannabinoid component of *Cannabis sativa*. This chemical is distinct from delta-9 THC, the main psychoactive compound found in marijuana.
- Delta-8 THC can be extracted and made from cannabidiol (CBD) in the hemp plant. However, its effects on the body are different from CBD.
- Although less psychoactive than delta-9 THC, delta-8 THC has psychoactive properties that can cause clinically significant toxicity.
- Federally, delta-8 THC is unregulated since it is different from delta-9 THC.
- Delta-8 THC appeals to youth seeking a 'legal high'. It is available as fruit-flavored gummies and in vape solution. The colorful fruit-flavored gummies can be attractive to young children.
- Recently in a nearby state, two cases of severe adverse reactions to delta-8 THC have been reported in children.
 - The children ingested their father's gummies, purchased at a vape shop.
 - They became symptomatic with deep sedation and slowed breathing with initial increased heart rate progressing to slowed heart rate and blood pressure.
 - Both children were admitted to the intensive care unit for further monitoring and oxygen supplementation.
- Exposures to delta-8 THC have also been reported in adults with products that were mistaken for CBD-like products. These exposures led to symptoms consistent with cannabinoid intoxication.
- Delta-8 THC can cause symptoms similarly observed during cannabinoid intoxication, including:
 - Lethargy
 - Uncoordinated movements, decreased psychomotor activity
 - Slurred speech
 - Increased heart rate progressing to slowed heart rate
 - Low blood pressure
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Sedation
 - Coma
- Long-term effects of using delta-8 THC are unknown.
- There is no specific antidote. Treatment is largely symptomatic and supportive care.
- Clinicians should be vigilant in observing patients presenting with marijuana-like symptoms who do not report a marijuana exposure or history of use.
 - Symptomatic patients should be questioned about their use of CBD or delta-8-THC products.
 - It is unclear whether delta-8-THC can be detectable or cross-reacts during routine testing for delta-9-THC.

Seek help for Substance Use Disorder as soon as possible. Call the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) at 800-662-HELP (4357), or visit www.FindTreatment.gov to locate support and assistance for Substance Use Disorder in your community.

For those who have questions about drug safety or any substance call your Michigan Poison Center at

1-800-222-1222

550 E. Canfield, Suite # 354
Detroit, Michigan 48201

www.mipoisonhelp.org

THIS IS AN OFFICIAL WEST VIRGINIA SUBSTANCE ABUSE ALERT: # WV003



**SUBSTANCE ABUSE ALERT
#WV003**

TO: Hospital emergency departments, community health providers, law enforcement agencies, Director, WV Emergency Medical Services, Regional Medical Directors, emergency medical services personnel, local health departments, WV Office of Drug Control Policy, WV Office of Epidemiology and Prevention Services, State Epidemiology Outcomes Workgroup members, local health departments, WV Board of Education

FROM: Elizabeth J. Scharman, Pharm.D., DABAT, BCPS, FAAC; Director, West Virginia Poison Center

DATE: March 10, 2021

DISTRIBUTION: As deemed appropriate within each agency receiving this alert

Reported Cases of Adverse Reactions to Delta-8-THC Products in West Virginia

Description:

Delta-8-THC is a cannabinoid component of *Cannabis sativa* that is a double bond isomer of Delta-9-THC, the psychotropic component of marijuana. It can be synthesized from CBD. Its actions on the body are not similar to CBD. Although less psychotropic than delta-9-THC, it does have psychotropic properties and is marketed for its psychotropic effects in fruit flavored candy gummies and vape solution.

It is promoted as being legal since it is not delta-9-THC and can be extracted and concentrated from the CBD in the hemp plant. However, some would argue that the fact it has to be synthesized into its final form puts its legality into question.

Demographics:

In March 2021, two cases of adverse reactions to Delta-8-THC products were reported in adults. In both cases it was mistaken for a product like CBD. In neighboring states, cases are also being reported that have included children requiring Intensive Care Unit admissions after exposure.

In addition to people having unintended consequences from what they thought was CBD, this drug will appeal to adults and adolescents seeking a "legal high". The fruit-flavored gummies are attractive to small children.

Patient Presentation:

Practitioners should be on the lookout for patients presenting with marijuana-like symptoms who do not report or a parent or caregiver does not report, a marijuana exposure. Symptomatic individuals should be asked about their use of CBD or delta-8-THC products.

Delta-8-THC does not elute in the same place as delta-9-THC so the ability to detect, and cross reactivity with the different laboratory tests that hospitals use to detect delta-9-THC, is not characterized fully.

There is no specific antidote. The West Virginia Poison Center is available 24 hours a day for toxicology consultations.

Reporting:

Please report cases of acute delta-8-THC toxicity to the WV Office of Drug Control Policy as you would overdoses from other drugs of abuse.

This message was directly distributed by the West Virginia Poison Center on behalf of the Substance Abuse Early Warning Network (a product of the WV State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup and the WV Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities). Receiving entities are responsible for further dissemination of the information as appropriate to the target audience.

Message Categories:

Network Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance, warrants immediate action or attention.

Network Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation.

Network Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation.

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West Virginia Substance Abuse Early Warning Network # WV003



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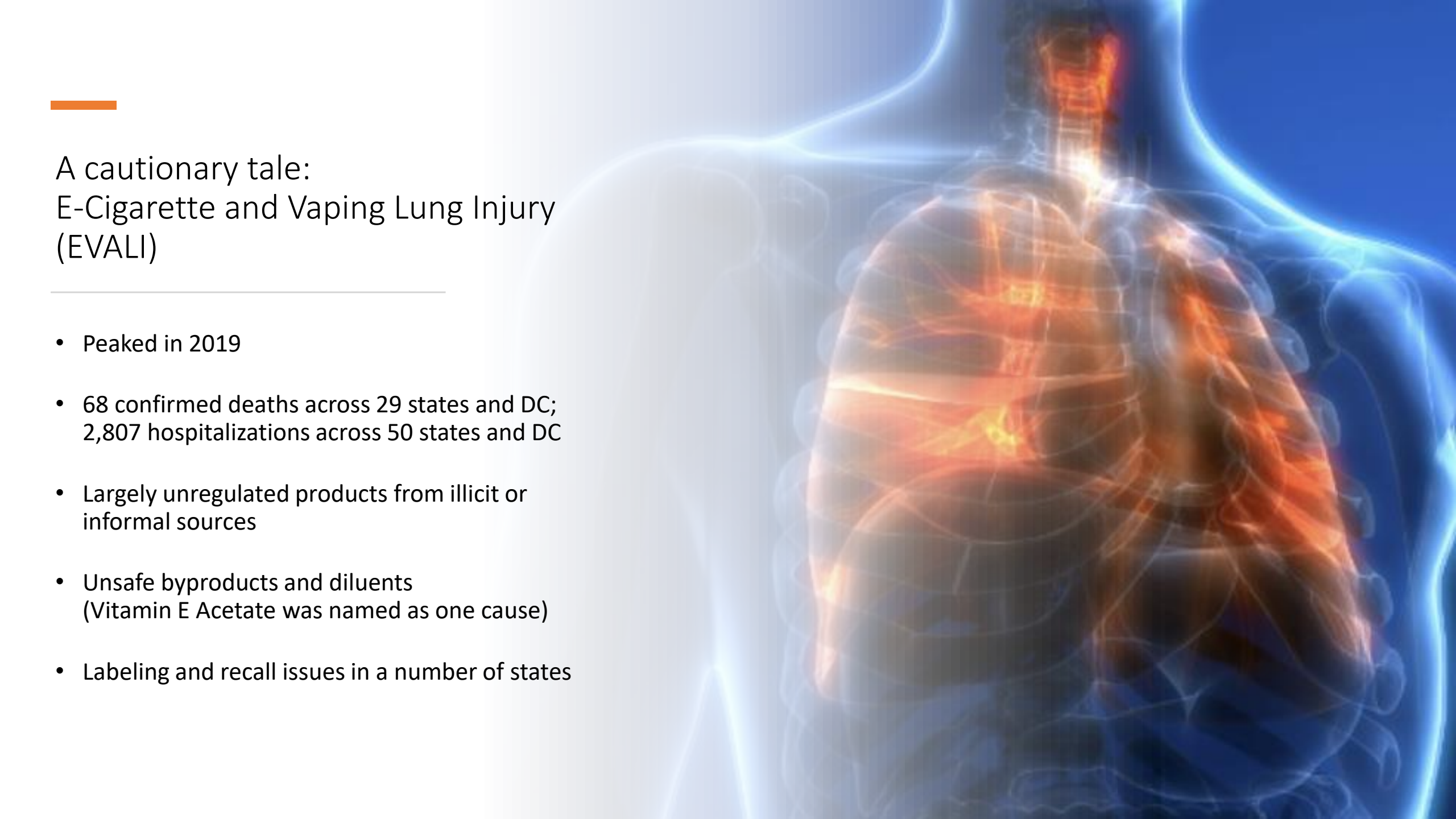
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A cautionary tale: E-Cigarette and Vaping Lung Injury (EVALI)

- Peaked in 2019
- 68 confirmed deaths across 29 states and DC;
2,807 hospitalizations across 50 states and DC
- Largely unregulated products from illicit or
informal sources
- Unsafe byproducts and diluents
(Vitamin E Acetate was named as one cause)
- Labeling and recall issues in a number of states

This issue is not unique to Oregon

- Lack of federal clarity from DEA/USDA/FDA on legality of Delta-8 and other THC isomers.
- Many states working on how to close regulatory loopholes here to protect consumer health and safety.

