



HEALTH BULLETIN

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Warning about Liquid Nicotine

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported that the number of calls to poison control centers involving e-cigarette liquids rose from one per month in Sept 2010 to 215 per month in Feb 2014. More than half of the calls involved children under age 5.

According to poison control, some children and toddlers who have come in contact with e-cigarette devices or liquid nicotine have become very ill, with nausea and vomiting being the most significant symptoms. Some have required emergency room visits.

What are e-cigarettes? E-cigarettes are electronic devices that provide a vapor of liquid nicotine and other substances to the user that simulates smoking. The use of e-cigarettes has been increasing in recent years among adults and teens, as marketers promote the devices as a safe and effective way to quit smoking, though there is no evidence to support this claim. The increased use and popularity of these products has led to new concerns among health officials.

What is Liquid Nicotine?

- o Liquid nicotine -- sold in small bottles or cartridges to refill e-cigarettes -- comprises nicotine, propylene glycol, and other chemicals. The liquid often comes in flavors that attract children and animals. Some e-cigarette refills also contain caffeine and are being marketed as energy supplements.
- o E-cigarettes and liquid nicotine containers are unregulated; manufacturers do not state on their product packaging the amount of nicotine contained in the product and do not warn consumers of the dangers associated with liquid nicotine use.
- o Nicotine is poisonous. Small amounts of liquid nicotine can be harmful if swallowed, absorbed by the skin or inhaled.
- o Symptoms of nicotine poisoning include nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, sweating, tachycardia (fast heart rate), Hypertension (high blood pressure), tremors, headache, dizziness and seizures. Higher levels of nicotine poisoning can result in hypotension (low blood pressure), bradycardia (slow heart rate), central nervous system depression, coma, muscle paralysis and respiratory failure.

Who Should Know?

- o All consumers who use e-cigarettes and/or liquid nicotine refills should be aware that the liquid can be harmful if swallowed, absorbed by the skin, or inhaled; and that sales are unregulated.
- o Parents of young children and teenagers should be aware that the products may be attractive to children.
- o Teenagers and young adults should be aware of the dangers of nicotine and liquid nicotine refills.

What to Do

- The American Association of Poison Control Centers recommends the following steps:
- Protect your skin when handling the products.
- Always keep e-cigarettes and liquid nicotine locked up and out of the reach of children.
- Follow the specific disposal instructions on the label.
- If you think someone has been exposed to an e-cigarette or liquid nicotine, call your local poison center at 1-800-222-1222 immediately.