

Steady rise in vape product poisonings among kids under 5

June 23 2023, by Ernie Mundell



The number of cases of vape product-related poisonings reported to

America's poison control centers doubled between 2018 and early 2023, a new report finds.

The bulk of those cases were in kids under the age of 5.

"The public should be aware that [e-cigarettes](#) have the potential to cause poisoning exposure and are a continuing public health concern," warned a team of researchers led by Nicole Tashakkori, from the Center for Tobacco Products at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

To prevent these tragedies, "adult e-cigarette users should store their e-cigarettes and e-liquids safely to prevent access by [young children](#)," they wrote.

According to the [National Capital Poison Center](#), the nicotine found in e-cigarettes can prove extremely harmful if inhaled or ingested by small children.

"Nicotine poisoning often causes nausea, vomiting, dizziness, tremors [shakiness] and sweating, and can make the heart beat much faster than normal," the center explained. "Severe poisoning can cause seizures. It can even cause death. Seizures can begin only 20-30 minutes after swallowing products containing nicotine."

And another new report, released Thursday by researchers at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, found that U.S. sales of e-cigarettes just keeps rising, from 15.5 million units per month in 2020 to nearly 23 million units in 2022.

That means a lot of vaping devices, refill containers and other paraphernalia are left lying around in American homes, ready for small hands to grab and explore.

The new report examined National Poison Data System (NPDS) data for April 2022 through to the end of March 2023.

Tashakkori and colleagues uncovered more than 7,000 reported cases of poisoning exposures from vaping products during that 12-month span.

The number of monthly exposures climbed by 32% over the course of the year—from 476 cases reported in April 2022 to 630 by March 2023.

Because reporting to the NPDS is voluntary, "the number of cases is likely underreported," the researchers added.

Very young children made up the bulk of these cases, they said.

"Among all exposures, 6,074 [87.8%] occurred among children aged less than 5 years," they said.

Luckily, less than 1% of the cases were so severe that children required hospitalization. However, just over 8% of cases needed some kind of treatment at a health care facility, the report found.

Only one case was fatal, a suspected suicide where a pediatric patient intentionally overdosed on a vape product, causing death.

In almost two-thirds (61%) of all cases of vape-linked poisonings, inhalation or nasal ingestion of the product was involved, while tasting or eating the product was involved in about 40% of cases.

One brand, especially, was most likely to be linked to a [poisoning](#). Among cases where a brand was ascertained, "the most commonly reported brand was Elf Bar [60.8%], a disposable e-cigarette available in a variety of flavors; monthly cases involving Elf Bar increased from two in April 2022 to 36 in March 2023," Tashakkori's group said.

And, "more than 90% of Elf Bar exposures were among children aged less than 5 years," they added.

In fact, "Elf Bar, for which sales in the United States have recently increased, was reported more often than all the other reported brands combined," the report authors noted.

Adults should always make sure that any vaping or smoking products are kept out of the reach of children. According to the National Capital Poison Center, that involves means locking products away in safe locations.

"That includes 'smoke juice' [e-liquids], cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco and chewing tobacco—and dirty ashtrays," the center stressed.

"Remember that used "smoke juice" containers may still contain nicotine. Wrap them up so kids and pets can't dig them out of the trash."

The new report was published in the June 23 issue of the CDC journal *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

More information: Find out how to keep kids safe from nicotine poisoning at [Nationwide Children's Hospital](#).

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