

Connection between Smoking/Vaping and COVID-19

Smoking and vaping have many negative effects on respiratory health. While more research and data are needed, the emerging evidence suggests that smokers and vapers may be at greater risk for COVID-19.

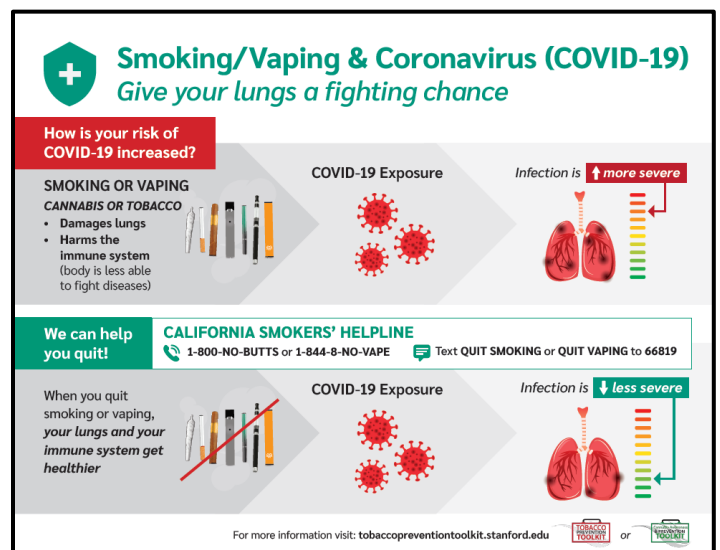
The [World Health Organization has already sounded the alarm](#), warning that tobacco use can increase a person's risk of suffering the worst and most deadly symptoms of COVID-19 and that highly social smoking devices like hookah can actually contribute to the virus's spread. [Research on more than 50,000 laboratory-confirmed cases](#) in China shows that patients with cardiovascular disease, diabetes, hypertension, chronic respiratory disease or cancer (conditions found more commonly in smokers than in non-smokers) are more likely to develop severe or fatal COVID-19 symptoms.

Dr. Nora Volkow, Director of the U.S. National Institute on Drug Abuse, recently [noted](#):

“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” and that “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.”

A recent [meta-analysis](#) of studies on smoking and COVID-19 concluded that among people with the virus, the risk of disease progression in those who currently smoke or previously smoked was nearly double that of non-smokers. The study also found that when the disease worsens, current or former smokers had more acute or critical conditions or death.

The [California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\)](#) is encouraging those who smoke or vape to consider quitting and notes that smokers and tobacco users could be at higher risk of COVID-19 infection. CDPH's Tobacco Control Program is also sharing information on their [website](#) and via [social media](#) about how [smoking and vaping increases](#) the risk of getting sicker from COVID-19.



Recognizing the urgency, several universities and hospitals in California are taking steps to protect the public and collect needed data: the University of California San Francisco has added smoking and vaping nicotine and cannabis to [COVID-19 triage protocol](#); doctors at the [UC Davis Cancer Center](#) sent letters to current and former smokers, warning them that smoking may make them more susceptible to COVID-19; the [UC Merced Nicotine and Cannabis Policy Center](#) is researching links between tobacco use and second hand smoke and COVID-19 and arming the public with valuable information; and the [Stanford Medicine Tobacco Prevention Toolkit](#) is providing resources to educators, parents, and youth.

There is conclusive evidence that smoking increases the risk for respiratory infections, weakens the immune system and is a major cause of a number of underlying health conditions, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), other lung diseases, heart disease and diabetes. These factors all create higher risk for severe illness and death from COVID-19. It is more important now than ever that to enact policies that reduce smoking and vaping and prevent young people from ever starting in the first place.