

DAILY NEWS BLOG

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Unauthorized Marijuana Vaping Cartridges Contain Toxic Pesticides and Could Cause Vaping-Related Illness

(*Beyond Pesticides*, October 10, 2019) Mysterious vaping illnesses across the country could be related to pesticide exposure, among other contaminants in black-market marijuana vaping products. To date, there have been 23 deaths from vaping-related illness, and about 1,100 cases of the illness nationwide. Yesterday, a [17-year-old boy](#) from the Bronx became the youngest person to pass away from the illness. Most patients have reported that they used vape cartridges with THC. THC is the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana.

NBC News recently commissioned laboratory tests of 18 THC cartridges – three from a legal Californian dispensary and 15 from unlicensed dealers. Cartridges from legal dispensary had no heavy metals, pesticides, or residual solvents. 10

out of the 10 of the black-market products tested were positive for pesticides. CannaSafe, the laboratory, reported that some of the unregulated products contained the fungicide [myclobutanil](#). Heating myclobutanil can cause it to break down into harmful products, including hydrogen cyanide – a known potent carcinogen. Other pesticides detected included mixtures of the following pesticide or pesticide formula ingredient: [fipronil](#), [piperonyl butoxide](#), [permethrin](#), [malathion](#), and others ([see full test results here](#)).

Melodi Pirzada, M.D., a pediatric pulmonologist at NYU Winthrop Hospital, called the finding of myclobutanil “very disturbing,” and mentioned that it would “cause a very toxic effect on the lungs.” Dr. Pirzada is alarmed at the results showing that 13/15 of the black-market samples contained vitamin E, a solvent which damages the lungs when inhaled.

The [nicotine vaping industry is under fire](#) as the illnesses impact young individuals that may be drawn in by fruity flavors such as “Candy Cane” and “Fruity Loops.” New York City filed a federal lawsuit against websites that sell these products to New Yorkers who are under 21, the legal age limit for tobacco products in New York. The American Vaping Association, meanwhile, maintains that the outbreak is linked to THC oils and black-market products.

Last December, [Colorado recalled two legal marijuana products](#) due to dangerous pesticide residues, raising questions on safety and regulations in cannabis production even in the state-sanctioned market. Beyond Pesticides insists that any and all pesticide use on cannabis is illegal. Advocates are asking states to establish laws and/or regulations that mandate an organic systems approach to cannabis production.

As stated in Beyond Pesticides’ [Action of the Week](#), “Pesticides have not been registered for use in cannabis production, yet they are being widely used under state-adopted enforcement levels that imply safety, but not subject to any standard of review that meets pesticide registration standards.” As seen in the case of myclobutanil, heating toxic chemicals and inhaling them through the sensitive exposure route of the lungs is dangerous – not only due to the active ingredient but also the breakdown components.

Congress should intervene on the cannabis issue to protect public health and safety. Ask them to: (1) Hold oversight hearings to document state violations of federal pesticide law by allowing the pesticide use in cannabis production and processing, despite not being registered for this use by EPA. (2) Request an OIG and Government Accountability investigation to assist in clarifying EPA and state enforcement responsibility to ensure compliance with pesticide product labels.



All unattributed positions and opinions in this piece are those of Beyond Pesticides.

Source: [NBC News](#)

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