



NATIONAL COUNCIL AGAINST SMOKING

Press Release
10 September 2019

American Lung Association warns e-cigarettes are not safe following 6 deaths

Yesterday the American Lung Association warned the public that e-cigarettes are not safe and can cause irreversible lung damage and disease.

The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the US says that more than 450 cases of severe lung disease linked to the use of e-cigarettes have been reported. Symptoms include breathing difficulties, shortness of breath and sometimes chest pain before patients were hospitalized. Other symptoms include vomiting, diarrhea and fatigue, while in hospital, patients experience pneumonia and respiratory failure.

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has collected 120 samples to try and identify the chemical that is the cause of the illnesses. The chemical samples collected include nicotine, cannabinoids, additives, and pesticides.

The CDC has asked the public to stop using e-cigarettes because of these cases of severe illness that they are seeing. We agree.

There is plenty of evidence already to show that e-cigarettes are harmful. With these deaths, we are seeing new levels of harm.

E-cigarettes are being used in South Africa without any information about what's in the liquid they are buying. There is also no health warning or information about the likely impact of using e-cigarettes on the product. The lack of regulation of e-cigarettes in South Africa has resulted in a proliferation of outlets selling these products without providing this basic information to users.

The Draft Tobacco Bill released for public comment last year included the regulation of e-cigarettes but that Bill has not yet been passed. We urge government to pass the Bill urgently so that the sale of e-cigarettes can be regulated. Lives are at stake!

We recommend that smokers who would like to stop smoking avoid the use of e-cigarettes, and instead speak to a doctor or pharmacist about other ways to stop smoking, including nicotine replacement therapy.

The National Council Against Smoking also runs a telephone counselling quitline (011 7203145) where smokers can get advice and support to help them stop smoking. CANSA has an online support site at www.ekickbutt.org.za which can also help smokers to stop.

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