

# WellnessWatch



Welcome to **WellnessWatch** -- The Starr Group's monthly digest of health and wellness awareness. Stay current with latest wellness trends and fitness buzz. *Be well!*



## Topic of the Month: **Lung Health**

**November** is typically the month for quitting tobacco use for the prevention of lung diseases and cancer. However, the popularity of e-cigarette use (vaping) has now been suspected of contributing to an epidemic of lung injury (not just a simple infection) across the United States this year.

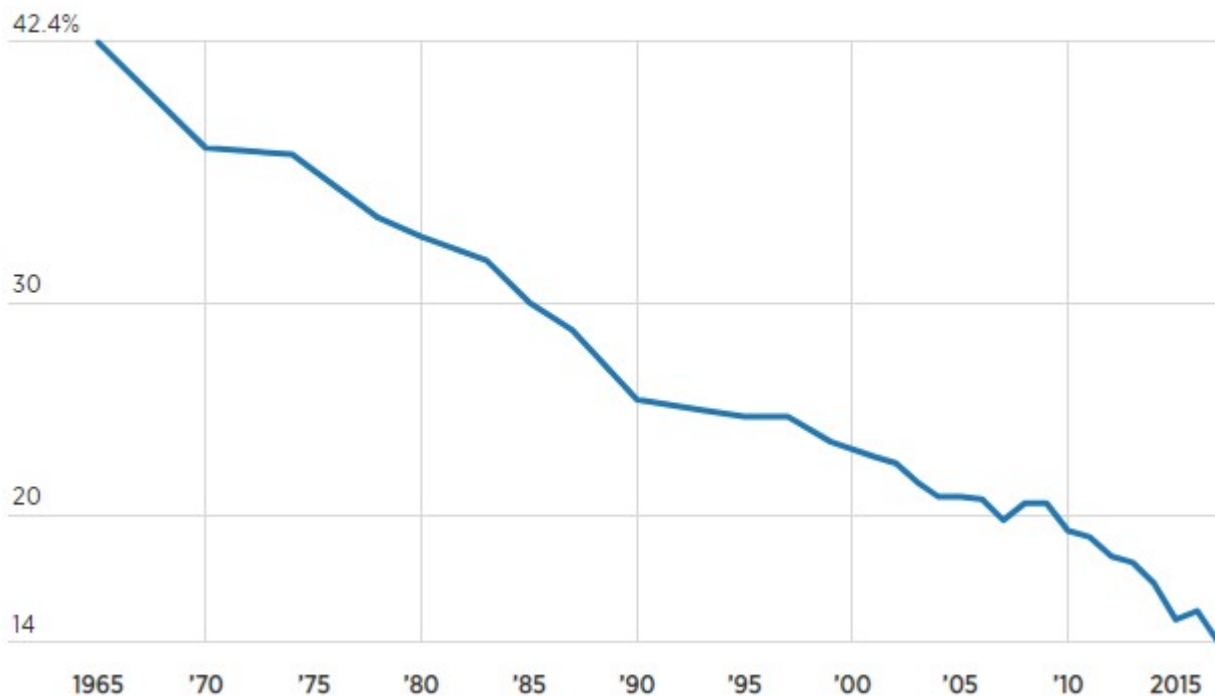
The CDC, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), state and local health departments, and other clinical and public health partners are investigating this multi-state outbreak. As of October 29, 2019, **thirty-seven deaths** have been confirmed in 24 states. (Latest outbreak information is updated every Thursday.<sup>1</sup>)

Regardless of the ongoing investigation, CDC recommends e-cigarettes and vaping products should never be used by youths, young adults and women who are pregnant. Adults who do not currently use tobacco products should not start using e-cigs. There is no safe tobacco product. All tobacco products, including e-cigs and vaping products, carry a risk.

## There is good news!

### Smoking rates have fallen to a record low

The cigarette smoking rate reached 14 percent in 2017, a record low and a 67 percent decline since 1965, when 42.4 percent of U.S. adults smoked cigarettes.



Source: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

New data shows that public health efforts focusing on tobacco cigarettes have been successful over the past 50 years. Initiatives like raising the price of tobacco, taxes, educating consumers about the danger of smoking and efforts to help individuals quit are primary drivers of the decline. Fewer young people are starting to smoke, older smokers are dying and others are quitting the habit.<sup>2</sup>



## Did you know?



- In 1965, 42.4 percent of adults smoked cigarettes, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- An estimated **14 percent** of adults (or 34.3 million people) smoked cigarettes in 2017, according to the CDC.
- When adding other categories, including e-cigarettes and smokeless tobacco, **19.3 percent** of adults (or 47 million people) used tobacco products of some kind in 2017, according to the CDC.
- E-cigarette use declined slightly between 2016 and 2017.
- As of October 29, 2019, **1,888** cases of e-cigarette, or vaping, product use associated lung injury (EVALI) have

been reported to CDC from 49 states (all except Alaska), the District of Columbia and 1 U.S. territory.



## **Break the Tobacco Craving!**

Coping with cigarette cravings in the moment will require both psychological, physiological and physical discipline. The effects of nicotine are chemically addictive, the stress relieving activity and the daily routine of smoking can be disruptive. Here are some activities to help curb those cravings for those transitioning to "Non-Smoker" <sup>3</sup> :

- Find an oral substitute: mints, gum, carrots or celery.
- Keep your mind busy: books, magazines, music, puzzles or online games.
- Keep your hands busy: squeeze balls, fidget spinners, or pencils.
- Brush your teeth: keep that "just brushed" clean feeling all day long.
- Drink water: slowly sip a large glass to minimize nicotine withdrawal.
- Light something else: candle or incense; try aroma-therapy.

- Get active: walk, yoga stretches, jumping jacks or pushups.
- Try to relax: try a calming bath, meditation, prayer, blow bubbles.
- Go somewhere smoking is not permitted: step into a public building, coffee shop, movie theater, etc.



# Get involved!

1. [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic\\_information/e-cigarettes/severe-lung-disease.html](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/severe-lung-disease.html)
2. <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/11/08/cdc-says-smoking-rates-fall-to-record-low-in-us.html>
3. <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/addictions/how-to-quit-smoking.htm>



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