

## **N.J. issues warning on liquid nicotine used in e-cigarettes**

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**BY MARY JO LAYTON**, STAFF WRITER | THE RECORD

New Jersey health officials are warning of the serious risk, particularly to young children, of the liquid nicotine commonly used in e-cigarettes.

“The concentration of some of the refills is extremely high,” said Dr. Steven M. Marcus, medical director and executive director of the New Jersey Poison Information and Education System. “Some are so high that if a child got a couple of drops it could put them into real serious trouble or death.”

Electronic cigarettes are devices that contain a combination of nicotine, flavor and chemicals that are turned into a vapor inhaled by the user.

The liquids used to refill these devices are sold in cartridges, vials and small bottles that are not required to be childproof. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, the amount of nicotine in some small 15 ml bottles of e-liquid contain is enough to kill four small children. One swallow can be fatal.

An 18-month old toddler died in New York State last December after drinking from a container of liquid nicotine.

The number of calls to poison control centers grew from nine in 2011 to 45 in 2014 in New Jersey, according to state health officials who announced the warning Thursday.

Nationally, the poison control centers have seen a dramatic rise in e-cigarette related calls, from one call a month in September 2010 to 215 calls a month in February 2014, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control. More than half of the calls involved children age five and under. Federal health officials said the nicotine poisoning problem may be underestimated because their research only reports calls to poison control centers and doesn't include cases where someone called 911 or went directly to the emergency room.

So far in New Jersey this year, there have been eight calls to poison control, including two from the parents of toddlers who put the devices in their mouths. The parents rinsed out the children's mouths and they were OK, Marcus said.

Earlier this week, an adult male called complaining of feeling jittery after a vial of liquid nicotine leaked on his pant leg, Marcus said. He was told to remove the pants and clean the area. In other cases a school nurse in Gloucester County called after a 17-year-old student said a classmate blew smoke in his face and he felt dizzy. A 21-year-old man from Union County called to say he was not feeling well after smoking an e-cigarette.

Meanwhile, a woman who was smoking a device in her car said the vapor made her eyes irritated and she sought treatment at a hospital.

Symptoms of liquid nicotine poisoning include vomiting, difficulty breathing, increased heart rate, and a jittery and unsteady appearance.

Health officials worry that children may be drawn to the colorful liquid available in hundreds of candy and fruit flavors with names such as “vivid vanilla,” “cherry crush,” and “cola.”

Even without swallowing, when taken into the mouth, liquid nicotine will be absorbed into the child’s mucous membranes. If swallowed, it will be absorbed in the intestinal tract. If it comes into contact with a child’s skin the liquid nicotine is absorbed through the skin like a nicotine patch.

“With the highly concentrated refill products, it is almost a perfect storm — a dangerous product because of concentration, in an attractive color and odor, in a non-child resistant container in a home with a “smoker,” said Marcus, an associate professor of pediatrics at the Rutgers New Jersey Medical School.

Anyone who suspects a child has been exposed to liquid nicotine should call the NJ Poison Help Hotline at 1-800-222-1222.

<http://www.northjersey.com/news/n-j-issues-warning-on-liquid-nicotine-used-in-e-cigarettes-1.1287965>