



Potential Lead Contamination in Used Vape Cartridges Questions and Answers June 14, 2019

Do vape cartridges offered for sale in Maryland contain lead?

To date, no finished vape product has tested positive for elevated levels of lead at the time of compliance testing (e.g., prior to distribution or sale). However, reports in other states and a small sample of used vape cartridges tested in Maryland indicate that lead may leach from metal heating coils into the cannabis liquid within the vape cartridge with use, over time. The MMCC has implemented expanded laboratory testing for the presence of lead and other heavy metals. If any medical cannabis finished product is determined to contain elevated lead levels, the product may not be offered for distribution or sale to patients or caregivers.

Has the MMCC ordered a recall of any vape products?

No vape products have been recalled at this time. To date, no medical cannabis finished product in Maryland has tested positive for elevated levels of lead prior to distribution or sale. However, the MMCC has implemented expanded laboratory testing for lead and other heavy metals based on reports of elevated lead levels in vape products available in other states.

If a sample analysis of a batch or lot of medical cannabis, including vape products, reveals elevated levels of lead, the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 10.62.17 requires a licensee to: (1) order a recall of the batch or lot, (2) notify any patient, caregiver, or dispensary who may have obtained medical cannabis from the batch or lot, and (3) offer and pay any reimbursement for any returned medical cannabis. In addition, if any product test results in elevated lead levels under the newly implemented heavy metals testing requirements, the product may not be offered for distribution or sale.

May a patient test their vape products at a registered independent testing laboratory?

No. Registered independent testing laboratories that conduct compliance testing for medical cannabis products may only test samples obtained from a licensed medical cannabis grower or processor.

Which vape products are potentially impacted?

While there is limited research on this topic, multiple studies on e-liquids have discovered elevated levels of lead in vape liquids due to lead in metal heating coils leaching into the vape cartridge with use, over time. The MMCC is not aware of any heavy metal leaching in vape products that use ceramic components.

If a patient is concerned their vape product may contain elevated levels of lead are they able to return the product?

The MMCC has not ordered a recall of any vape products. Concerned patients or caregivers may contact the licensed dispensary where the product was purchased to determine how the unused vape product may be returned for disposal.