

# Health Highlights: August 3, 2018

Here are some of the latest health and medical news developments, compiled by the editors of HealthDay:

## **E-Cigarette Sales in U.S. Climb as Prices Fall**

There was a large increase in sales of electronic cigarettes and related products in the United States in recent years as their prices fell, a federal government study says.

It found that average monthly sales of such products rose 132 percent from 2012 to 2017, *NBC News* reported.

During the same period, “average monthly prices significantly decreased in 39 states for rechargeables, in 31 states for disposables, in 20 states for pre-filled cartridges, and in eight states for e-liquids,” according to the study published Thursday in the journal *Preventing Chronic Disease*.

“Overall, U.S. e-cigarette unit sales generally increased as product prices decreased,” wrote the team at the Office on Smoking and Health, part of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In related news, U.S. Food and Drug Administration officials said Thursday that the agency is preparing a new product standard for e-cigarettes, *NBC News* reported.

The FDA has a number of concerns about e-cigarettes, including harmful chemicals they might contain and the risk they could get young people addicted to nicotine.

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## **Trump Reverses Higher Vehicle Fuel Efficiency Rules**

Public health and environmental groups warn that the Trump administration's newly-announced plan to freeze fuel-efficiency requirements for cars and trucks through 2026 will cost Americans more money at the pump and threaten their health.

"By 2030, the pollution equivalent of this rollback will be like firing up 30 coal power plants," Paul Cort, an attorney at the advocacy group Earthjustice, said in a statement, the *Washington Post* reported.

"It's a boon for big oil that ordinary Americans will pay for with their health and their wallets," he added.

The Obama administration ordered automakers to reach a fleetwide average of 51.4 miles per gallon by 2025 in order to improve public health, fight climate change and save Americans money.

The Trump administration claims that the Obama-era rules would make vehicles more expensive and result in people driving older, less-safe vehicles, the *Post* reported.

The new plan was announced Thursday and could spark a legal battle with states.

Privately, some automakers have expressed concerns about sudden changes in fuel economy rules and having to meet different state standards, the *Post* reported.

The Trump administration said it will accept public comment on its proposal for 60 days, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency plan to hold public hearings in Washington, Detroit and Los Angeles.

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**One Woman Dead, One in Critical Condition Due to Dry Ice in Car**

Dry ice is believed to have left one woman dead and another in critical condition after they were found unresponsive in a car in Pierce County, Washington.

The owner of the car is an ice cream salesman who had dry ice in four coolers in the car. The women were found in the car a few blocks from the man's home, *CNN* reported.

"His mom and his wife got in the vehicle to give his mother a ride home," said Detective Ed Troyer, a spokesman for Pierce County Sheriff's Department "The fumes escaped from the coolers."

The man's 77-year-old mother is reported to have died of suffocation, and his wife to have been in critical condition, according to *CNN*.

Dry ice is frozen carbon dioxide. Instead of melting into a liquid as it thaws, dry ice turns into odorless and colorless gas. In enclosed spaces, high levels of carbon dioxide can kill people within minutes.

The situation involving the two women "was a combination of things that went terribly wrong," said Troyer, who suggested that the car's ventilation may not have been sufficient to remove the carbon dioxide emitted by the dry ice, *CNN* reported.

A few other similar cases involving dry ice in small spaces have been documented in the U.S. in the past.

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### **New Ebola Outbreak in Congo**

Just a week after being declared Ebola-free, the Democratic Republic of Congo said Wednesday that a new outbreak of the deadly virus has killed at least 20 people.

Authorities in North Kivu Province notified the country's

Health Ministry on Saturday of 26 suspected cases of Ebola, including the 20 deaths, Health Minister Dr. Oly Ilunga Kalenga said in a statement, *The New York Times* reported.

Samples from the six survivors were tested Tuesday, and four were positive for Ebola.

“The Democratic Republic of Congo is facing a new epidemic,” the minister said in the statement.

This is the 10th time since 1976 that Ebola has threatened the Democratic Republic of Congo, *The Times* reported.

The previous outbreak lasted a few months and killed at least 33 people. It was declared over on July 24.



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