

Vaporizer pens - also known as e-pens, vape pens, and e-cigarettes - are an increasingly popular way of using marijuana. They offer convenience and discretion, as well as less health risks to those around you. But have you ever wondered just how dirty your vape pen is? It's one of the germiest consumption methods around! This is partially because the mouthpiece of a vapor pen is more likely to come in contact with contaminated surfaces than that of a water pipe or bong. Another cause is simply that bacteria has more time to gather and grow on vape pens than with a recently rolled joint or blunt.

Vaporizer Pen Bacteria

Pipe Wipes did some research on the bacteria you might find on the pen, and the results aren't pretty.

Keep it in the drawer, a pouch, a bag, here or there, we wanted to know what bacteria lived on an electronic cigarette that's used daily.

FOX23 found three people that allowed us to swab their e-cigarettes, and then send the specimen off to the lab.

All participants say they're nervous because they throw the device wherever.

Our first participant said, "I either put it on my computer desk or in my purse."

Participant Jamie Furr said, "I usually throw my e-cig into my purse, just on the go."

-"Hidden bacteria living in electronic cigarettes, FOX23 investigates" (Tulsa, OK 2/3/14)

Desktop & Purse Bacteria

Have you ever set your vape pen down on your desk, or tossed it in your purse? They seem like harmless locations, but both are teeming with germs and bacteria. There are approximately 10,000,000 bacteria on your average office desk - that's 400 times MORE than an average toilet seat!

Millions of us spend our days slaving over a keyboard. But lurking between the keys, hidden on the mouse and nestled in your phone lies more than 10 million bacteria - 400 times more than on the average toilet seat.

Unhygienic working conditions are a 'key contributor' to the 131 million working days lost each year in the UK and millions more around the world, to illnesses including colds and flu.

Bacteria and viruses can multiply on hard surfaces, remaining infectious for up to 24 hours, hygiene expert and visiting professor at the University of Salford, Dr Lisa Ackerley told MailOnline.

-“Why it's time to detox your desk: Average worker comes into contact with more than 10 MILLION disease-causing bacteria lurking on their keyboard, phone and mouse”
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-2859334/Why-s-time-detox-desk-Average-worker-comes-contact-10-MILLION-disease-causing-bacteria-lurking-keyboard-phone-mouse.html> Lizzie Parry 12/5/14

Purses aren't much better:

"About a third of them have fecal bacteria on them," confirms Charles Gerba, a University of Arizona microbiologist who has studied bacteria living on handbags, plus all sorts of delightfully disgusting things like E. coli on shopping carts and germey office break rooms. Gerba's research found that the bottoms of handbags were the nastiest, likely because women placed them on the bathroom floor (that is what the little hooks on the back of the doors are there for, people!). The UK study found that the handle was a bacteria hotspot, and the stuff in the inside of the bag like makeup or hand cream had the toilet-flush levels of bacteria.

-“Your gross handbag is germier than a toilet” (5/30/13) Melissa Dahl
<http://www.today.com/news/your-gross-handbag-germier-toilet-1C10120964>

E-Cigarette Swab Results

With all of this in mind, we had to find out the results of the swabbed e-cigarettes from the FOX23 News investigation:

We took it to Tulsa University's lab where they cultured it and found a surprising answer to our question, "what bacteria lies on an electronic cigarette."

Dr. Mohammed Fakhry at the TU lab told FOX23, "two of the three were really full of a good number of bacteria species and also some fungi.

Dr. Mohammed Fakhry showed me the two cultures that didn't fare so well
"It's expected to have microbes, pretty much everywhere but it is the number that is worrisome.

At least the appearance would tell me that there are about three or four different types of bacteria strains, said Mohammed.

We do want to mention that because the number of electronic cigarettes that we tested was so small, the results cannot be 100 percent statistically accurate.

Even though it's not extensive research, Fakhry says the presence of yeast, mold and bacteria sends a message.

"It's a good reminder that you have to clean them out because it is high numbers, even regular non-pathogenic bacteria in large numbers... you don't know what they can do," said Fakhry.

But just how harmful is this bacteria, and what all can you actually find on your pen?

Dirty E-Pens Can Harbor...

Bacteria

- Pseudomonas
- Staphylococcus (Causes Staph Infections)
- Acinetobacter
- Enterobacter
- Klebsiella
- Aeromonas
- Serratia

Fungus, including Molds

- Trichophyton
- Epidermophyton
- Acremonium
- Aspergillus
- Scopulariopsis
- Cladosporium

Yeast

- Candida
- Rhodotorula

You can contract diseases and viruses like:

- Tuberculosis (TB)
- Oral herpes (Herpes Simplex/HSV-1)
- Bacterial Meningitis

- Oral Thrush (Oral Yeast Infection)
- Mononucleosis (Mono)
- Cold
- Influenza (Flu)
- Hepatitis B
- Epstein Barr
- Meningococcal Disease
- Adenovirus
- Hand-Foot-Mouth Disease
- Gastrointestinal Infections (can cause diarrhea and vomiting)

Now that you have the facts, you can start making your smoking experience more hygienic. It's never been easier to do so, because Pipe Wipes are specially designed to clean and disinfect smoking pens, pipes, hookahs, and bongs! Just swipe one over the mouthpiece of your vape pen before each use, and before/after sharing your pen with anyone else. Also, make sure to wash your hands frequently. These two simple tips are the best ways to keep it clean while smoking, and avoid negative consequences while medicating or recreating with marijuana.