

## Using Masks

It is surprising that masks, even ones we use when we grind something are not part of the suggested protection guidelines by the US government. Lately in the US masks were discounted by Trump's advisors. Keeping away by at least six feet was recommended.

But what about smoking? I've abhorred being near smokers all my life. As a child I watched people deeply sucking on a cigarette, cigar or pipe. Now it is Vaping.

What do we see in all these? We see the smoker strain to get the smoke deep into their lungs and I guess into their blood stream. We actually see the smoke come out after a long pause. It's fascinating to see it exit the nose and mouth, but especially the nose. It's not the most pleasant of places.

Where has the smoke been? What is it like when it is expelled?

The smoke has been deep in the lungs and is now coated with some of the fluids and materials that populate a smokers' pulmonary system. The smoke floats away and sometimes engulfs those nearby. We actually see it return from the lungs and then spread out like a blanket. I always tried to get away from this. The smell is overpowering.

With ardent smokers the inhale exhale-cycle is visible and the smell drives others away. Everyone knows how the odor 'infects' the smoker's clothes and those of bystanders. Remember this stuff was in the smoker's lungs and now it is on the smoker's clothes and ours too. Addicted smokers seem to be immune to the smell.

Really habitual smokers often follow a deep inhale-exhale cycle with a fit of coughing which ejects more droplets to the area around them. The smoke is coated in part with what coats the lung tissue.

I was shocked to witness my first vaping episode a year or so ago. I was at a wedding. A young very husky man had his back turned to me. I was looking in his direction and all of a sudden a mist was ejected from his collar. I was shocked. What could it be? If I had a fire hose nearby and could have acted quickly, I would have tried to save him from being burned to death from some unknown source under his clothes.

I did not recognize it as smoker's smoke. The misty material almost exploded out from under the shirt collar. It had a finer quality than smoker's smoke, but I bet it carried lung moisture to the area around the man who appeared to be on fire. I later saw that he had his collar open and was blowing vapor down his open shirt. It was the wild time in weddings where the young men become loud.

Later I was curious about my first encounter with vaping (it really is a vapor)

I got near the husky young man and I heard a sucking noise. It was forcing the vapor deep into the man's lungs to be expelled again and again.

I think a mask is not a replacement for distance between people, but it sure gives some protection. Try concentrating on a smokers exhale. Depending upon fans or wind direction, the smoker's exhale travels a long, long way.

Mike Sterling April 2, 2020