As the COVID-19 pandemic progresses, many are asking what they can do to help keep themselves and their loved ones as safe as possible. The advice from public health officials is clear: wash your hands frequently, practice social distancing, and if you smoke or vape, quit now.

"Because it attacks the lungs, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 could be an especially serious threat to those who smoke tobacco or marijuana or who vape." - Dr. Nora Volkow, Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse

COVID-19 is caused by a coronavirus - a term that refers to a family of viruses that produce respiratory infections. There is a wealth of evidence to show that smoking tobacco makes smokers more susceptible to respiratory infections. This is because:

- Smoking and vaping inflame lung tissues
- Smoking and vaping suppress immune system responses necessary to fighting off infections
- Marijuana smoke also irritates airways and alters immune responses in ways that can increase risk of infection

Studies of the epidemic in China found that smoking was associated with the worst cases of COVID-19:

- COVID-19 patients who were smokers were 2.5 times more likely to be admitted to an ICU, require mechanical ventilation, or die than non-smokers

As the COVID-19 pandemic progresses, there has never been a better time to quit smoking or vaping! Smokers and vapers should contact the California Smokers' Helpline by calling 1-800-NO-BUTTS or visit www.nobutts.org/COVID.

For more information on COVID-19, visit the California Department of Public Health: https://cdph.ca.gov/covid19

**SOURCEs:**