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Diacetyl (butanedione; butane-2,3-dione) exposure due to a recalled vaping product

On 14 July 2025, the Ministry of Health discovered that a vaping product for sale in New Zealand (Suntree Vanilla Cream, 30 mL) contained diacetyl at over four times the permitted concentration. Diacetyl is a flavouring agent, and long-term inhalation is associated bronchiolitis obliterans, an inflammatory lung condition. We estimate that up to 300 units have been supplied to consumers across the country.

The product was withdrawn from retailers on 15 July, and recall notices are being displayed at physical and online retailers from 18 July 2025. Consumers are being advised to contact their healthcare provider if they develop respiratory symptoms following use of the product.

This communication informs you of consumers potentially presenting with concerns following exposure. We expect the risk to consumers to be low due to short exposure times. If a patient presents with respiratory concerns due to consuming Suntree Vanilla Cream vapes, please complete a routine respiratory assessment, and provide usual care as required.

What is diacetyl?

Diacetyl (butanedione; butane-2,3-dione) in low levels is used as a flavouring agent. New Zealand legislation allows vapes to contain diacetyl at a maximum concentration of 0.22 mg/mL. However, excessive exposure to diacetyl can be harmful to health, particularly repeated and chronic exposure. Hazard statements for diacetyl include¹:

- harmful if swallowed
- causes skin irritation
- may cause an allergic skin reaction
- causes serious eye injury
- toxic if inhaled
- may cause damage to organs through prolonged or repeated exposure

Excess diacetyl inhalation has been linked to serious respiratory disease and decreased lung function. In bronchiolitis obliterans, the bronchioles become inflamed, scarred and constricted, leading to irreversible blocking of air movement. Irritation of the skin, eyes, and respiratory tract has also been reported.



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¹ <https://www.sigmaaldrich.com/NZ/en/sds/mm/8.03528?userType=anonymous>