How to determine if a patient is at risk for flavorings-related lung disease?

As with any individual presenting with respiratory symptoms, it is important to take a complete occupational history in order to determine what role, if any, the workplace may have in an individual’s specific respiratory condition. This includes not only asking patients where they currently work, but also where they worked in the past, what they did at each of their workplaces, and what chemical, dust, or other hazards they were exposed to at work.

Conditions may exist for significant exposures to food flavoring substances in facilities that manufacture or utilize food flavorings as part of their processes. Any individual working in one of these facilities may be at risk for flavorings-related lung disease, but it is expected that workers directly exposed to manufacturing processes involving food flavorings are most at risk.
What should physicians do if they identify an individual with flavorings-related lung disease?

Physicians in Connecticut who diagnose a case of flavorings-related lung disease should contact the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health, Occupational Health Unit at (860) 509-7740.

In addition, Connecticut State Law requires that physicians diagnosing any work-related illness complete a Physician’s Report of Occupational Disease form, and submit that form to the Connecticut Departments of Labor and Public Health within forty-eight hours of recognition of that condition. Submission of this information is required by Connecticut General Statute (CGS) § 31-40a, confidential under CGS § 19a-25 and exempt from HIPAA restrictions according to 42 CFR § 164.512(a-b). A copy of the Physician’s Report of Occupational Disease form can be found on the Connecticut Department of Public Health website at http://www.ct.gov/dph

Additional Resources:

U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA)
www.osha.gov/SLTC/flavoringlung/index.html

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH),
www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/flavorings/

The Flavor and Extract Manufactures Association of the United States (FEMA)

California Department of Health Services
http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ohb/flavorings

Comprehensive Listing of Related Documents

References:

