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February 6, 2023

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### **SAFE Glen Cove Coalition- Edibles How Parents Can Prevent THC Poisoning**

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A recent article in JAMA Pediatrics discusses the alarming rate at which stores are illegally selling laced candy products resulting in children poisoned by THC. Marijuana is now legal for medical or recreational use in most U.S. states. This results in the availability of tempting treats that contain tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana, which is also on the rise. Unfortunately, so is the incidence of unintentional THC Poisoning risk these products pose to children who get a hold of them.

Marijuana can be dangerous in all forms for children and adolescents, both in the short term and the Long-term. It is important for parents to understand how much THC is contained in edible products and how THC is absorbed in the body to keep their children safe.

THC food products often are made to closely resemble popular brand name candy and snacks. The packaging may be nearly identical, with the name slightly changed (think "KeefKat" or "Pot Tart"). Edible marijuana products often resemble regular sweets and snacks. Some popular THC-infused products include Gummy candies, chocolate bars, candies, Lollipops, fudge, and other candies. Baked goods include snack foods, and desserts, such as cookies, brownies, cupcakes, popcorn, and ice cream. Or even sweetened beverages such as sodas and lemonade. Despite their ordinary appearance, just one pot cookie or candy bar can contain several times the recommended adult dose of THC. Anyone who eats an entire THC edible-especially a child-can experience overdose effects such as: Intoxication, Altered perception, Anxiety, Panic, Paranoia, Dizziness, Weakness, Slurred Speech, Lack of Coordination, Apnea (not breathing for 10 or more seconds) and even Heart Problems.

Regular use of marijuana is also linked to psychological problems, lung health and a higher chance of substance abuse disorder in adulthood. Even using marijuana one time can alter motor control, coordination, and judgment. This can contribute to unintentional deaths and injuries. For teens, regular marijuana use can impair memory and concentration and may interfere with learning. It's also associated with lower odds of completing high school or getting a college degree. Regular use of marijuana is also linked to psychological problems, lung health and a higher chance of substance use disorder in adulthood. Even using marijuana at one time can alter motor control, coordination, and judgment. This can contribute to unintentional deaths and injuries.

Edible THC products take longer than smoked marijuana to have an effect. Smoking takes just seconds to minutes. But a THC edible typically takes 30 to 60 minutes after being eaten and digested. The peak effect happens 3 to 7 hours after ingestion. Someone experimenting with THC edibles might not feel the effects as quickly as expected. They might ingest large amounts to try to "get high." This leads to overdosing.

There has been a reported enormous rise in the number of kids unintentionally consuming marijuana products. This is especially true in states where marijuana has been legalized. In 2020, the American Association of Poison Control Centers reported more than 3,000 exposures edible marijuana products involving children in the United States ages 12 and under. Most of these exposures were in kids 5 years old or younger.

Some states, including Colorado, Washington, Oregon, and Alaska, have passed laws to try to prevent THC poisoning. Products that contain marijuana may be required to have clear labeling with standardized serving sizes and THC content. Some states require child-proof packaging. But this isn't enough it appears. Marijuana was legalized in Colorado for medical use in 2000 and for recreational use in 2012. JAMA Pediatrics looked at unintentional exposures to marijuana in Colorado. The study found packaging regulations like these aren't enough to keep kids safe. Accidental THC poisoning cases in children under age 9 continued to increase after Colorado legalized marijuana use, even with packaging regulations. Edible THC products were involved in more than half the cases.

The best way for parents to safeguard their children from marijuana edibles is not to have them at home. As more states legalize marijuana, fewer young people view it as harmful. If there are marijuana edibles in the home is it recommended to store them as if they were medication and in out-of-reach or locked locations from children.

JAMA Pediatrics is a monthly peer-reviewed medical journal published by the American Medical Association. It covers all aspects of pediatrics. For more information please visit [www.jamanetwork.com](http://www.jamanetwork.com).

SAFE, Inc. is the only alcohol and substance abuse prevention, intervention, and education agency in the City of Glen Cove. The Coalition is concerned about marijuana edibles and is employing environmental strategies to educate and update the community regarding the negative consequences in collaboration with Carol Meschkow, Manager- Tobacco Action Coalition of Long Island. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow [www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition](https://www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition) or to learn more about Marijuana and its negative consequences please visit [www.safeglencove.org](http://www.safeglencove.org).

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