

Press Release

August 18, 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Dr. Sharon Harris

516- 676-2008

[safeglencove@yahoo.com](mailto:safeglencove@yahoo.com)

### **SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: Cannabis Poisonings Rising Among Children**

In March the news reported that several Middle School children from Long Island were taken to the emergency room after ingesting cannabis edibles. Alarming news of this trend has appeared again in a recent article in the New York Times that says more children and teens are suffering symptoms of cannabis ingestion including seizures and life-threatening breathing problems.

Cannabis products have become more accessible in homes as the number of states with legal medicinal and/or recreational cannabis continues to grow. Edible cannabis products are easily mistaken for regular food, candy or beverages making accidental ingestion common. The CDC recommends that people keep all cannabis products out of the reach of children in childproof containers.

As legalization and commercialization of cannabis have spread across the United States, making marijuana edibles more readily available, the number of cannabis-related incidents reported to poison control centers has sharply increased: from about 930 cases in 2009 to more than 22,000 last year, data from America's Poison Centers shows. Of those, more than 13,000 caused documented negative effects and were classified by the organization as nonlethal poisoning.

These numbers are an undercount, public health officials say, because hospitals are not required to report such cases. More than 75 percent of the poisonings last year involved children or teenagers. The New York Times examined data from the national Poison Centers, surveyed regional centers and more than 200 doctors, reviewed court records, and interviewed physicians and public health experts. The Times identified dozens of children across the country who had consumed cannabis products from stashes belonging to relatives or friends and were hospitalized with paranoia, vomiting or other symptoms of poisoning.

In most instances of cannabis exposure, the physical effects were not severe, according to the poison control data. But a growing number of poisonings have led to breathing problems or other life-threatening consequences. In 2009, just 10 such cases were reported to poison centers; last year, there were more than 620 — a vast majority of them children or teens. More than 100 required ventilators.

Each year, tens of millions of Americans use cannabis, most without problems. But in interviews, emergency physicians, pediatricians, toxicologists and other doctors expressed concern about the growing public perception that T.H.C., the intoxicating component in cannabis, is completely safe. As cannabis products proliferate, including those with hemp-derived T.H.C. that is legal in many states where marijuana isn't, adults can unwittingly expose children to risk. Most of the reported cannabis exposures last year were deemed unintentional.

The toxicity of cannabis depends largely on the potency of the product and the size of the person. A high enough dose of T.H.C. can be so sedating that a person's tongue blocks his windpipe, or it can trigger a seizure that requires intubation. But in general, an adult would have to consume a very large amount of cannabis to get that ill, doctors said: It might take hundreds or even thousands of milligrams of T.H.C. to cause severe side effects in a 150-pound adult — but far less for a child.

The city's poison control center said cases involving young children had become almost a daily occurrence, including some who had breathing problems or fell into a coma. Though most of the documented poisoning involved children.

Many accidental overdoses happen just because of the packaging. Edibles come in many shapes and sizes, from savory chips to seltzer drinks to candies and snacks. Packaging of some THC edibles and food products often resembles brands and foods children are familiar with and find appealing. The packaging may be nearly identical, with the name slightly changed (think "KeefKat" or "Pot Tart"). 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.

Most states have potency limits for T.H.C. edibles, but many physicians said the caps were too high, there are often 100 milligrams per package. At least one state, Michigan, allows foods with 200 milligrams. And doctors and public health officials have criticized packaging and marketing that might appeal to children. Cannabis lobbyists in some states have resisted additional restrictions, warning lawmakers that this could send consumers to the illegal market and deprive states of tax revenue. As public health advocates have sought more protections, they have been up against an industry that sometimes downplays or rejects evidence of harm. And some existing rules are vague or unevenly enforced.

In 2023, the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition embarked on an effort to draft and propose a new law restricting incoming stores to B2 District areas as strong and effective laws and regulations were needed to protect young people from deadly addiction by reducing access to edibles, tobacco, vaping products and other drug paraphernalia. With the assistance of the City Attorney, Tip Henderson, that effort came to successful fruition at the City Council meeting whereby the proposed law was passed unanimously.

SAFE is the only alcohol and substance use prevention agency in Glen Cove whose mission is to eliminate alcohol and substance use in Glen Cove. Its Coalition is concerned about cannabis use- especially in youth as their brains are developing. The Coalition is conducting a prevention awareness campaign entitled “Keeping Glen Cove SAFE; Underage Cannabis Use,” to educate and update the community regarding cannabis use and its negative consequences. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on [www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition](https://www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition) or visit SAFE’s website to learn more about Cannabis/Marijuana use at [www.safeglencove.org](http://www.safeglencove.org).