

Beware of cannabis brownies, candies and other treats that appeal to kids

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They may look like familiar supermarket treats such as gummy bears, brownies and cookies. But make no mistake: Edible cannabis products

are not for kids.

Unfortunately, many kids are eating these products when they find them at home. Emergency room physicians across the country are seeing more kids who have accidentally ingested these products.

"Anecdotally, I have seen an increase in pediatric cannabis exposures since marijuana was legalized for [recreational use](#) in California," said James Chenoweth, associate professor of emergency medicine and medical toxicologist at UC Davis Health.

Chenoweth analyzed nationwide Poison Control Center calls from 2009-2019 in an unpublished study and looked at all reported cannabis exposures. With marijuana now legal in 19 states for recreational purposes, Poison Control has seen the number of calls about marijuana exposure rise across the country.

In California, the number of cannabis-related exposures reported to Poison Control among children ages 18 and under has grown from 150 in 2009 to 777 in 2019.

Poison Control data is difficult to analyze due to the lack of an edible product exposure code before 2017, Chenoweth added.

The potency of cannabis in these edible treats can be quite strong. Five milligrams of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana, is the typical dose for adults who don't use [marijuana](#) every day. Still, one cookie can have up to 100 mg of THC. Other edibles are dosed in small-sized bites. A single THC-laced brownie bite, gummy bear or donut hole has 5-10 mg of cannabis.

"You are supposed to cut up the cookie into tenths, but who eats a cookie like that? Who eats just one gummy bear?" Chenoweth said. "If

you didn't know that you were eating a THC product, it would be easy to fall victim to unintentional THC poisoning," Chenoweth said.

When children ingest edibles, side effects can include vomiting, dizziness, difficulty walking, a rapid heart rate, drowsiness, confusion and breathing difficulties.

"Edibles generally cause children to be unsteady and altered," Chenoweth said. "We don't have any specific antidotes for cannabinoids, so our goal is to watch them until the cannabis gets out of their system."

UC Davis Children's Hospital leads the Safe Kids Greater Sacramento coalition, and coordinator Jennifer Rubin offered the following tips for keeping [young children](#) safe around edibles:

- Store edibles out-of-reach and in locked cabinets, like you would with medications or other toxic products.
- Avoid consuming edibles in front of [children](#) since they like to copy adults.
- Children are attracted to candies and foods that look like things they normally eat, so try to purchase edibles that don't mimic other items in your house.

"Another pro-tip: For teens, use a combination lock or a key lock to keep them away from any stored medication, alcohol and [recreational drugs](#)," Rubin said.

Provided by UC Davis

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