# Marijuana: Hidden Risks, Trends and Harm Reduction Strategies





## Objectives

- Introduction to the poison control center
- Overview of cannabinoids
- Description of available THC products
- ☐ THC edibles toxicity
- ☐ THC edibles epidemiology
- Harm reduction strategies





#### **Ohio Poison Control Centers**

- □ 24/7 poison control helpline supporting Ohioans
  - □ Drug and Poison Information Center
  - ☐ Central Ohio Poison Center
- ☐ Committed to reducing the incidence and severity of poisoning injury through early intervention, education, advocacy, and research
- □ Respond to poisoning exposures
  - □ Public
  - ☐ Healthcare Providers
- □ Drug information and other toxicology related questions





### Pre-presentation survey!







### But first some definitions....

- □ Cannabis
- □ Cannabinoid
- □ Cannabidiol
- □ Cannabinol
- □ Tetrahydrocannabinol
- □ Endocannabinoid





#### CANNABIS STRAINS

#### **SATIVA**



HIGH THC LEVEL

#### **INDICA**



HIGH CBD LEVEL

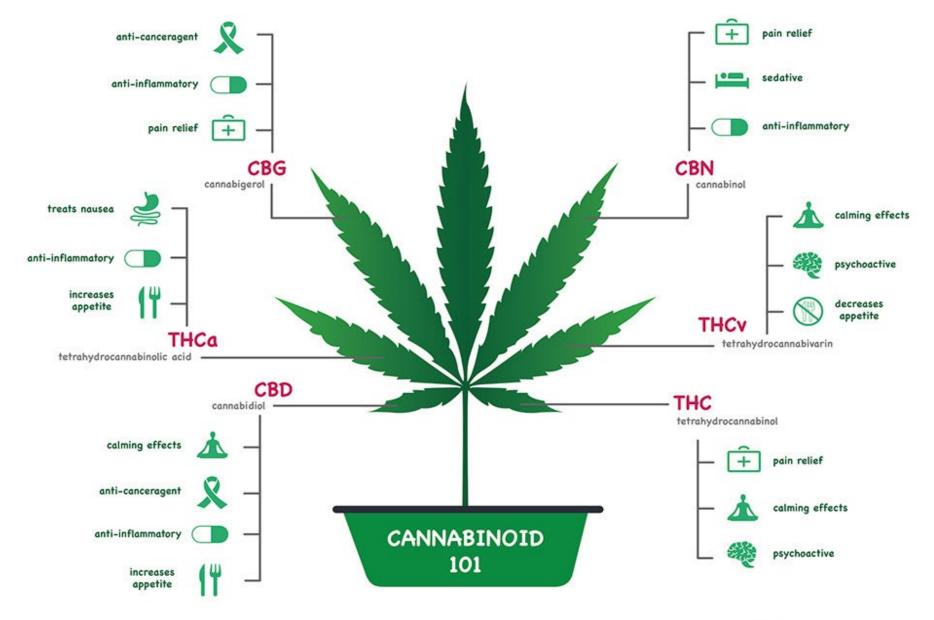
#### **RUDERALIS**



Low THC and CBD











#### The Human Endocannabinoid System

CBD,CBN and THC fit like a lock and key into existing human receptors. These receptors are part of the endocannabinoid system which impact physiological processes affecting pain modulation, memory, and appetite plus anti-inflammatory effects and other immune system responses. The endocannabinoid system comprises two types of receptors, CB1 and CB2, which serve distinct functions in human health and well-being.



CB1 receptors are primarily found in the brain and central nervous system, and to a lesser extent in other tissues.

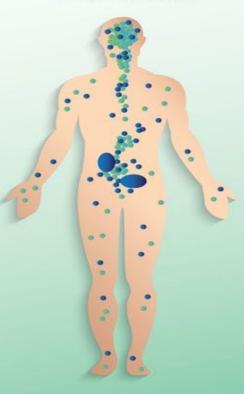
CB 1

CBD does not directly "fit" CB1 or CB2 receptors but has powerful indirect effects still being studied.

CB 2

CB2 receptors are mostly in the perepheral organs especially cells associated with the immune system.

#### Receptors are found on cell surfaces

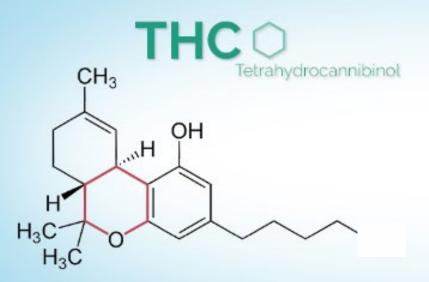






### THC vs CBD

 $C_{21}H_{30}O_2$ 









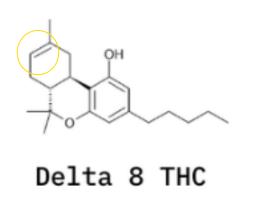
- ☐ Dronabinol (Marinol®) 1985
- Anorexia & chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting
- □ Directly binds CB1 and CB2 receptors in Endocannabinoid system

- ☐ Cannabidiol (Epidiolex®) 2018
- ☐ Lennox Gastaut, Davet and Tuberous sclerosis syndrome
- Indirectly interacts with Endocannabinoid system

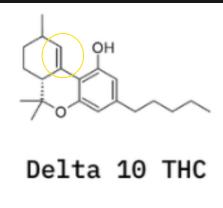




# $\triangle 8_{vs} \triangle 9_{vs} \triangle 10$





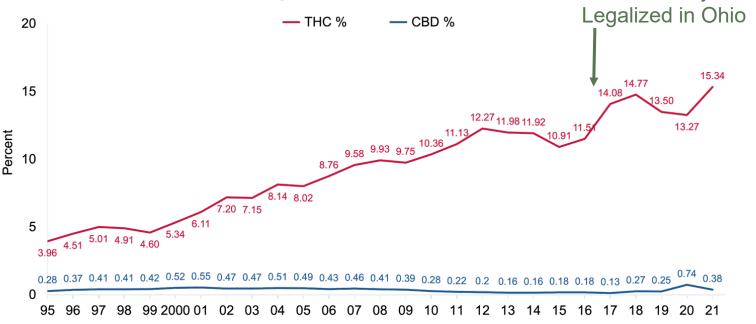






# Today's THC (non-edible) potency 287%

Percentage of THC and CBD in Cannabis Samples Seized by the DEA, 1995-2021 Medical Marijuana







### Marijuana Legalization





#### Marijuana is Legal in 40 States WA ME MT ND MN OR NY ID WI SD MI WY PA IΑ NE NV OH ΠL IN UT CO VA CA KS MO KY In Ohio... NC TN OK AZ NM AR SC **Medical:** GA AL MS 2016 (2019) LA TX Recreational: ΑK 2023 Recreational/Medical Medical

https://mjbizdaily.com/map-of-us-marijuana-legalization-by-state/





#### Ohio Medical Marijuana Dispensaries



#### >83 Medical MJ Dispensaries in Ohio as of Jan 2024

https://com.ohio.gov/divisions-and-programs/cannabis-control/about-dcc/licenses/what-we-do/medical-marijuana-dispensary-map

(Ohio Department of Commerce, 2024)





### THC Edibles





### Introducing THC Edibles

(Note: Info is specifically related to THC, Not CBD)

- □ Common forms: Gummies, chocolates, baked goods, and beverages
- ☐ Often resemble regular food items, making them appealing and may be easily accessible





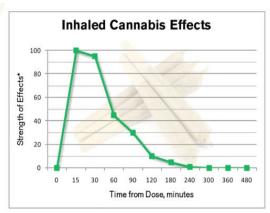


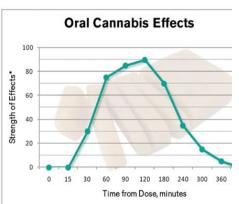




### Introducing THC Edibles

- ☐ THC edibles are <u>metabolized differently</u> in the body compared to smoking
- Onset of effects are delayed with ingestion vs smoking
- May lead to unintentional overconsumption and stronger effects





<sup>\*</sup>Strength of effects is rated subjectively based on research review (see below), 100 = peak strength of inhaled cannabis effects

#### Inhalation

Smoking, Vaporizing

- Fast Onset
- Strong Effects Peak
- Rapid Decline in Effects Strength
- Short Duration of Experience

#### **Oral Consumption**

Edibles, Beverages

- Delayed Onset
- Drawn-out Effects Peak
- Gradual Decline in Effects Strength
- Long Duration of Experience



#### No Limit, No Oversight, Readily Available

- Up to 90% strength THC concentrates (highly potent)
- Look-alikes
- Multi-dose packages



















A



B



C



D







 $\mathsf{A}$ 













### RECOGNIZING THC PRODUCTS



\*Ohio requires universal Board of Pharmacy symbol













# Added Risk....How can you tell outside of the packaging?







### Pediatric THC edibles toxicity





#### Impact of Legislative Changes on edibles



#### THC vs CBD edible

#### Criteria for evaluation in a health care facility

#### THC edible

- Acute ingestions greater than or equal to 10mg in children less than 7 years old
- Acute symptomatic ingestions in children less than 7 years old
- All intentional self-harm ingestions
- Adults with minimal to moderate symptoms can be managed at home
- Individual patient factors such as, but not limited to, co-ingestions and co-morbidities may affect criteria for evaluation

#### **CBD edible** (pure CBD with <0.3% THC)

- Can be managed at home if asymptomatic
- All intentional ingestions
- Individual patient factors such as, but not limited to, co-ingestions and co-morbidities may affect criteria for evaluation





#### Case Report

S: Mom is calling because 2-year-old got a hold of Delta 8 THC gummies with 40 mg THC gummy 2 hours ago. He called it candy and ate ~ 10-40 of them. He vomited once right after and is now getting very sleepy and stumbling around. Mom is wondering what she should do?

ED: vomiting, unable to arouse, RR decreasing Intubated and sent to the ICU





#### **Ohio Poison Center THC Edible Exposures 2015-2023**

■ 82% of children 0-5 years with THC exposures required care in a healthcare facility ☐ 60% admitted to the hospital ☐ 16% of those were admitted to a **critical care** unit ☐ 93% of children 13-19 years with THC exposures required care in a healthcare facility ☐ 46% were **admitted** to the hospital ☐ 11% of those were admitted to a **critical care** unit





# Pediatric Edible Cannabis Exposures and Acute Toxicity: 2017–2021

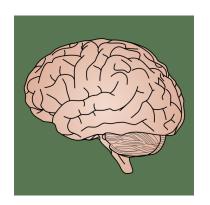
Marit S. Tweet, MD, a.b Antonia Nemanich, MD, b.c Michael Wahl, MDb.d

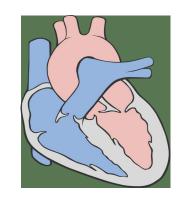
**OBJECTIVES:** This study evaluates trends in pediatric cannabis edible ingestions in children younger than age 6 years with regard to toxicity, medical outcome, and health care utilization for the years 2017–2021.

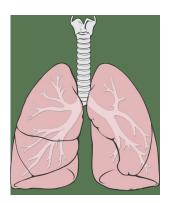
abstract

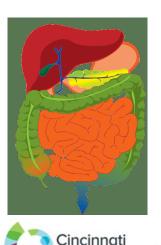
METHODS: We performed retrospective analysis of the National Poison Data System data for pediatric exposures to edible cannabis products in children <6 years from 2017 to 2021. Data were analyzed quantitatively with a focus on incidence, common clinical effects, medical outcomes, health care utilization, and changes in acute toxicity between the pre-COVID years (2017–2019) to the COVID years (2020–2021).

**RESULTS:** There were 7043 exposures reported during 2017–2021. In 2017, there were 207 reported cases, and in 2021 there were 3054 cases, an increase of 1375.0%. Most exposures











### Trends





#### Trends: THC (all forms)

Reports to **US Poison Control Centers** of **intentional use and misuse ingestions** of marijuana in school-aged children and adolescents (6-18 years) have increased by 245% from 2000-2020, surpassing alcohol exposures to become the most common intentionally ingested substance for this age group.

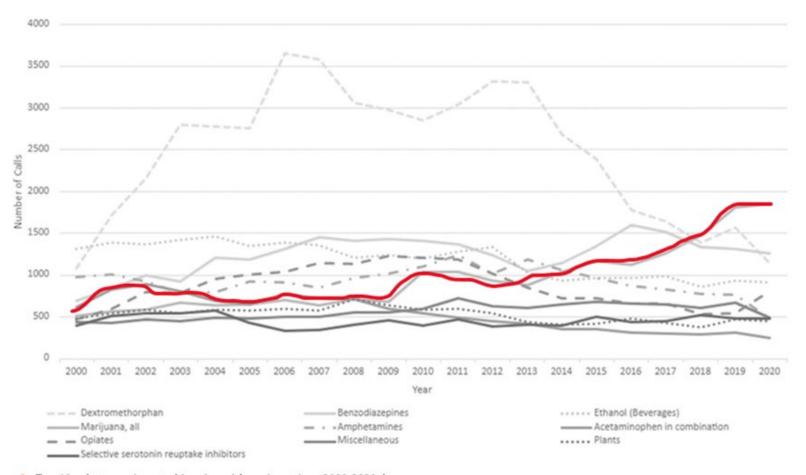
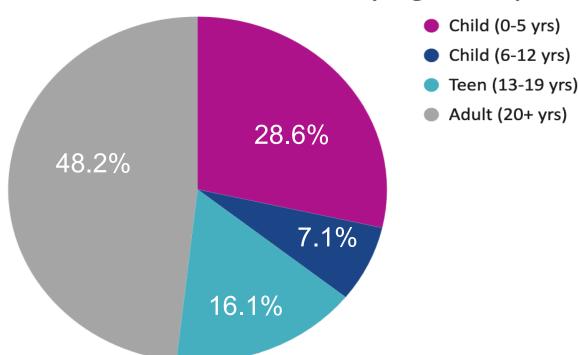


Figure 2. Top 10 substances ingested in misuse/abuse ingestions 2000-2020, by year.

#### Trends: THC Edibles

 In Ohio between 2015-2023, edible THC exposures in teens and children accounted for over half of all reported THC exposures in the population.

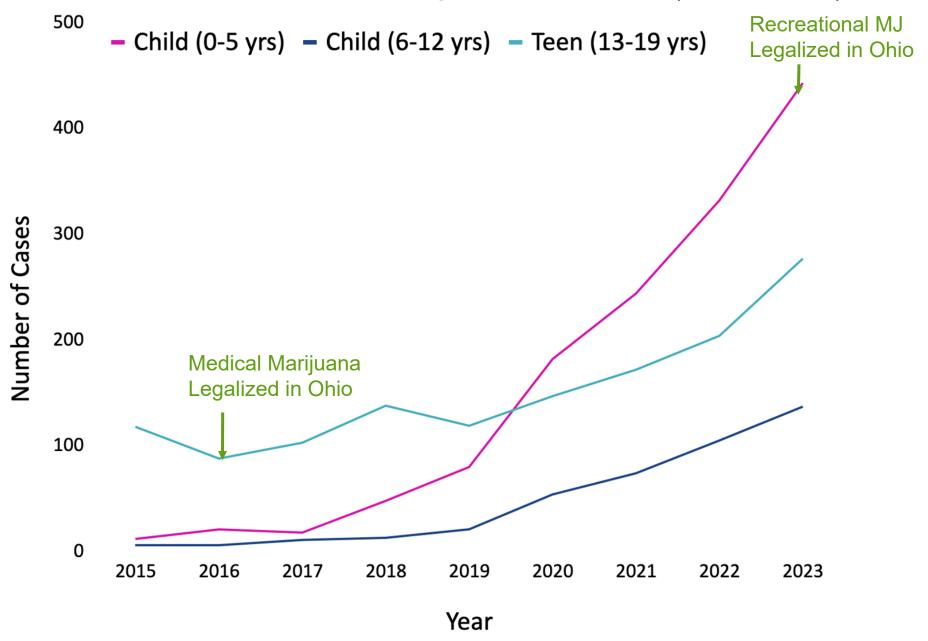
Total Edible Marijuana Exposures reported to Ohio Poison Centers by Age Group



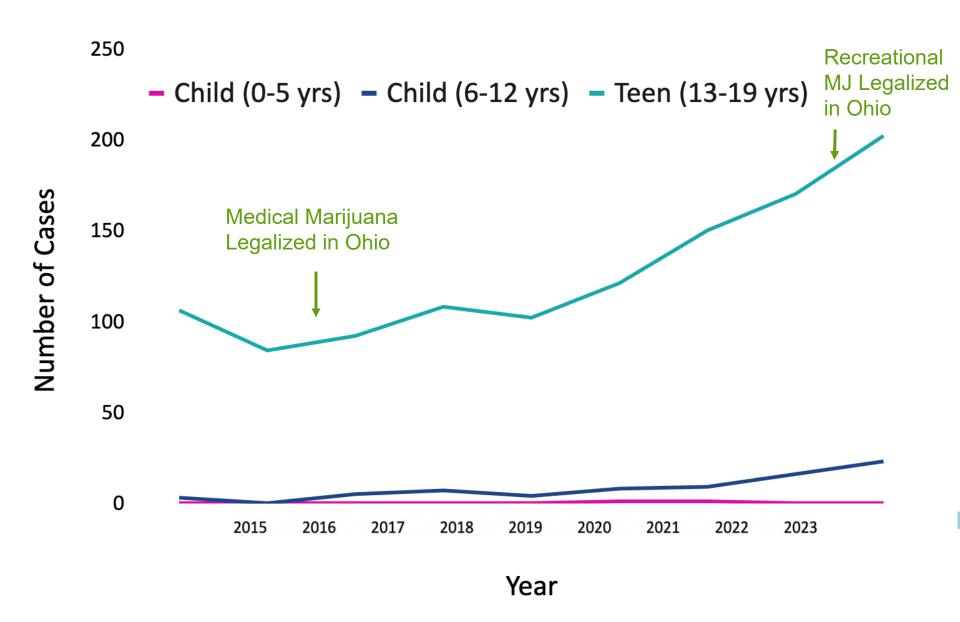




#### Accidental THC Edible Exposures in Ohio (2015-2023)



#### Intentional THC Edible Exposures in Ohio (2015-2023)



## Prevention and Harm Reduction Strategies





## **Vulnerable Populations**

Need for increased awareness of risk for these populations...

Children and adolescents  ☐ THC affects the developing brain ☐ Impairs how our brains build connections between areas needed for thinking, memory and learning ☐ Long term effects still unknown
Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding  ☐ Increases risk of pregnancy complications and affects an unborn baby's developing brain
People with certain psychiatric conditions  ☐ Any type of psychosis or those with family history of schizophrenia ☐ THC use can worsen these conditions
Anyone operating a motor vehicle  "If you feel different, you drive different"  Legal Implications
Cincinnati

## Need to Know Terms

- □ Potency: The concentration or strength of THC in a cannabis product, typically expressed as a percentage. Ex. If the product has 20% potency, then 20% of the product weight is THC
- □ Dose: the amount of THC consumed at a given time. Typically measured in milligrams (mg) of THC.
   Varies based on method of use and potency.
- □ Serving Size: Amount of a cannabis product consumed in a single serving. One cookie vs 1/8 of a cookie. Varies widely and source of confusion for users.





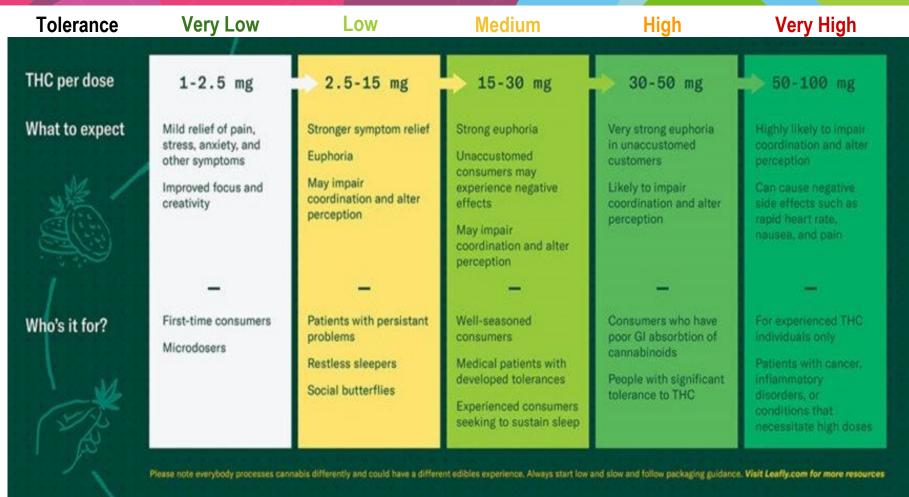
### THC Edibles

- The amount of THC in edibles can vary across a single product and across batches formulated at different times, making it difficult for users to estimate how much THC they consume.
- Users are often unaware of the serving size for one dose of THC











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**POISON** 

**CENTER** 



## Potency, Dosing and Serving Size



\* The intoxicating effects of this product may be delayed by two or more hours. Learn more at DixieElixirs.com

#### Ingredients:

Powdered sugar, corn syrup (light corn syrup, high fructose corn syrup), skim milk powder, semisweet chocolate [(chocolate liquor, sugar, cocoa butter), soy lecithin, pure vanilla, vanillin], butter, cocoa (processed with potassium carbonate,) vanilla extract (alcohol, sugar), salt, THC (Tetrahydrocannabinol) CO2 oil

The standardized serving size for this product is 10 milligrams of active THC. This container includes 10 servings.

#### **Nutrition Facts**

Serving Size: 0,125 oz (4 grams) Servings Per Container: 10

Amount Per S	erving			
Calories:	15	Calories	from Fat:	0
			% Daily	Value*
Total Fat (	Og			0%
Saturate	d Fat	Og		0%
Trans Fa	t Og			
Cholesterol	Omg			0%
Sodium 5	mg			0%
Total Carbo	hydrat	e 3g		1%
Dietary F	iber	Og		0%
Sugars	2g			
Protein 0g	3			
Vitamin A (	0% Vi	tamin C	0%	
Calcium (	0% Ir	on	0%	

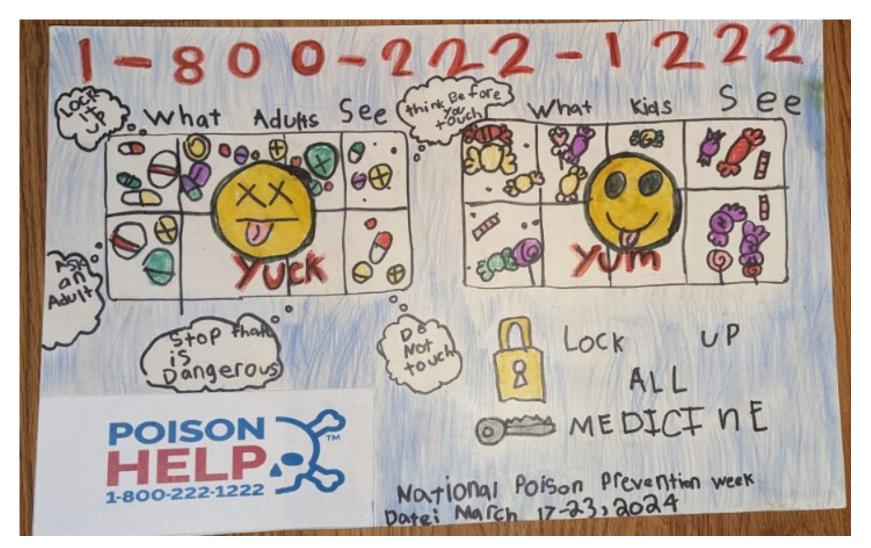
This item is perishable. Keep refrigerated. Please recycle.

Warning: There may be health risks associated with the consumption of this product. This product is unlawful outside the State of Colorado. This product is infused with marijuana. This product was produced without regulatory oversight for health, safety or efficacy. There may be additional health risks associated with the consumption of this product for women who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or planning on becoming pregnant. Do not drive a motor vehicle or operate heavy machinery while using marijuana. This product was tested for molds, mildews, filth, microbials, herbicides, pesticides, fungicides and harmful chemicals. KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN. This package is child





## Prevention and Harm Reduction







## **Toddlers & THC**

#### Did you know . . .

- □ Early exposure to THC can lead to increased risk of substance use later in life
- Prenatal exposure to THC may result in low birth weight and developmental issues including fetal brain development and behavior
- □ Children exposed to THC in the home may be at higher risk of accidental ingestion and poisoning
- Long-term effects of THC exposure on toddlers are still not fully understood

## **PREVENTION & SAFETY:**

## **TODDLERS**

Vigilance and proactive measures are key in preventing accidental THC ingestion among young children. Stay informed, communicate effectively, and prioritize safety at all times!





#### **Store Safely**

Keep all THC-infused products securely locked away and out of reach of children. Consider using childresistant packaging and storing products in a high-up or locked cabinet.



#### **Educate** Yourself

Take the time to learn about the signs of THC ingestion in young children and familiarize yourself with emergency procedures. Knowing what to do in case of accidental ingestion can save valuable time in an emergency.



#### Label Awareness

Always read product labels carefully and be mindful of any THC-infused products that may resemble common food items. Teach children from a young age to avoid consuming unfamiliar or unapproved items.



#### Communication

Maintain open
communication with other
caregivers, babysitters, and
family members about the
importance of keeping
THC-infused products
away from children.
Establish clear guidelines
for handling and storing
such products in shared
spaces.



#### Seek Professional Help

In the event of accidental ingestion or suspicion of THC exposure, seek immediate medical attention. Contact poison control at 800-222-1222, or visit the nearest emergency room for prompt evaluation and treatment.





## **Teens & THC:**

Edible cannabis products are increasingly perceived as less harmful than smoking marijuana among teens.

#### Did you know . . .

- □ Cannabis use can affect brain development, including impairing how the brain builds connections between the areas necessary for thinking, memory and learning
- □ Regular cannabis use can impede development of other coping skills and is linked to higher risk for depression and suicide
- ☐ Teens using THC are 4-7x more likely to develop cannabis use disorder than those who did not use under age 18. They are also more likely to develop a substance use disorder later in life
- □ Regular cannabis consumption between 14-21 years of age is linked to poorer school performance and a decreased likelihood of completing high school and obtaining a college degree
- □ Detrimental long-term effects of use on teens is still not fully known

## PREVENTION & SAFETY:

## **ADOLESCENTS**

THC cannabis-infused products like gummies, candies, and cookies can have serious effects on your mind and body if misused.





#### **Know the Risks**

Understand that THC edibles can be much stronger than smoking marijuana. The effects can take a long time to kick in, leading you to eat more than you should. This can result in intense highs, anxiety, paranoia, and even hallucinations or complications of medical conditions. Using THC can also affect your brain development.



#### Educate Yourself

Take the time to learn about the potential dangers of THC edibles. Talk to trusted adults, read and ask questions if you're unsure about something. Knowledge is your best defense against making harmful choices.



#### Set Boundaries

Decide on your personal limits when it comes to using marijuana or THC edibles. Remember that it's okay to say no, even if your friends are using them. Your health and well-being are more important than fitting in.



#### Seek Help

If you or someone you know experiences negative effects from THC edibles, don't hesitate to seek help. Talk to a trusted adult, call your poison control center at 800-222-1222, or seek medical attention if necessary. It's important to get support when you need it.



#### Practice Health Coping Skills

Instead of turning to marijuana or THC edibles to cope with stress or difficult emotions, try healthier alternatives like exercising, talking to a friend, or practicing relaxation techniques. Building healthy habits now will benefit you in the long run.





## **Community Awareness**

- Advocate for regulations mandating child resistant packaging
- Support community education campaigns about THC edible safety and reducing risk factors in susceptible populations
- Encourage retailers to prioritize child safety in packaging design and products that are easily distinguishable and understandable to consumers
- Promote dialogue among vulnerable populations, parents, caregivers, and healthcare providers





### Need Help or Have Questions?

## Call the Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222 www.ohiopoisoncenters.org



- Ohio's regional poison centers recognize the value of prevention on reducing poisoning injury, substance misuse and abuse, and the mental health crisis and are jointly accredited by the American Association of Poison Control Centers, the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OMHAS) and the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).
- Staffed by specially trained nurses, pharmacists, paramedics and physicians.
- Free to call, anytime 24/7/365
- All services are provided confidentially and without judgement.

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changing the outcome together

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