

KEEPING KIDS SAFE FROM EDIBLE MARIJUANA PRODUCTS

With the increase in availability of edible marijuana products, such as brownies, cakes, chocolate-peppermint bars, chocolate truffles, cookies, cupcakes, fruit drinks, fudge, muffins, lemonade, lollipops, sparkling peach and mandarin elixirs, watermelon dew drops along with a variety of other candies, there has also been a rise in accidental cannabis poisonings by children as reported by hospitals in Colorado. The facts are simple - when such delights are found in the home - children see them and want to eat them.

The ingestion of even half of a discarded cookie recently found in a yard and eaten by a child in Colorado can send a frantic mother to the hospital emergency room for treatment of her child's symptoms.

Colorado, like the other states with medical or recreational marijuana, has tried to keep the edible products away from children by ordering stores to sell them in child resistant packages or kept in locked child-resistant containers. Such packaging requires manufacturers to list ingredients and include serving sizes. Unfortunately the products now available are designated for adult consumption.

Prescribed doses of THC, the active ingredient in marijuana products used to control nausea from chemotherapy, is between four (4) and twelve (12) milligrams for children ages two to four. Some edible marijuana products have three hundred (300) milligrams of THC.

Packaging, no matter how child-proof, is not always child proof. When edible marijuana products make their way into the home where young children reside extra care must be taken to keep the products out of a child's hands.

PREVENTION

How do parents keep their kids safe from eating edible marijuana products?

An exploring child can find, what may look like their favorite treat, even if stored in a supposed safe place with labels clearly marked with the ingredients. **REMEMBER:** Little children cannot read labels and it must be the responsibility of parents to keep their child safe. Treat edible marijuana products as if they are like any other household poison and keep the products out of the reach of children.

- Store in locked boxes or cabinets
- Isolate products

- Adults - do not consume edible marijuana products in front of children

SYMPTOMS OF ACCIDENTAL MARIJUANA POISONING IN CHILDREN

- Change in consciousness levels
- Difficulty walking
- Disorientation
- Extreme sleepiness
- Incoherent
- Non responsive
- Respiratory distress

Accidental marijuana poisoning in children is also dangerous, because children can vomit from ingesting too much of a strong substance and aspirate the vomit. When children are admitted to the emergency room with accidental marijuana poisoning doctors are not looking for cannabis consumption as a cause of symptoms they see. To determine what is causing the child's symptoms invasive and expensive tests, like a Spinal Tap or CT scan, are likely. In addition, when admitting their child to an ER some parents are embarrassed or too scared to mention the possibility of accidental ingestion of edible marijuana products which are the true cause of a child's illness. This causes a time delay in treating the child.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE OLDER CHILD

With an older child or teen - talk about:

- underage consumption of marijuana products being illegal
- drugs / alcohol / marijuana use
- how to make good decisions
- peer pressure
- not accepting any edible product or drink from strangers
- being watchful of those around them acting intoxicated and/or disoriented
- how to seek help from a parent or trusted adult

BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL

Set a good example. Your actions speak louder than words.

RESOURCES TO CONTACT and/or ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Rocky Mountain Poison & Drug Center (poison 303-389-1100)
- Poison Help (800-222-1222) (info@rmpdc.org)
- Poison Prevention Children's Hospital of Colorado
- Safe Kids Denver (720-777-8412) (www.usa.safekids.org)