



St. Lawrence County Public Health Department

Jolene Munger, MPH, MA ■ Interim Public Health Director
80 State Highway 310, Suite 2 ■ Canton, New York 13617-1476
Phone: (315) 386-2325 ■ Fax: (315) 386-2203

Press Release

Date: 8/18/23
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: **Miranda Turnbull**
mturnbull@stlawco.org
315-386-2325

The Risks of Marijuana Edibles in Children

Last year, the Upstate New York Poison Center saw a significant increase in the number of calls relating to children who had eaten marijuana edibles. With many edible marijuana products resembling regular food and candy, there is a growing concern for the safety of young children. The coloring and branding on many edible packets often mimic popular snack foods such as Nerds, Jolly Ranchers, and Sour Patch Kids candy. The copycat packaging can be so similar to regular snack foods that even adults may not immediately notice the subtle differences in name and design. Earlier this year, the Federal Trade Commission issued Cease and Desist letters to six different companies for marketing edible products containing THC that were nearly identical to many popular snack foods, as shown below:



Some of the products cited in FDA-FTC cease and desist letters to companies selling THC products copying the look of snacks popular with children

Adults should pay close attention to the exact wording on the packaging, the nutrition label, and be on the lookout for any symbols that may say THC. Edible tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) products pose a unique risk as children often consume quantities exceeding the recommended adult dosage.

According to the Upstate New York Poison Center, THC edibles present several hazards that differ from those associated with smoked marijuana which include:

- Taking 30 minutes to 2 hours to take effect, so some people may eat too much, which can lead to poisoning and/or serious injury.
- Causing intoxicating effects lasting longer than expected, depending on the amount ingested, the last food eaten, and medications or alcohol used at the same time.
- Being unpredictable. The amount of THC, the concentration or strength, is very difficult to measure and is often unknown in edible products. Many people who use edibles can be caught off-guard by their strength and long-lasting effects.

Unfortunately, since certain states have legalized marijuana, there has been an increase in accidental marijuana poisoning cases among children. This has led to emergency room visits. Children who accidentally ingest edible marijuana products can experience various overdose effects such as dizziness, weakness, slurred speech, apnea, and heart problems.

To reduce risks associated with accidental consumption of marijuana edibles, the Upstate New York Poison Center advises the following guidelines for adults over the age of 21:

- Save the Poison Center's helpline number, 1-800-222-1222, as a precautionary measure.
- Store all products containing marijuana out of reach and at a higher elevation to prevent access by children.
- Consider acquiring a medication lock box for secure storage.
- In the event of suspected marijuana ingestion by a child, immediate action should be taken by contacting the Upstate New York Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222.

For further information:

[Poisoning | Health Effects | Marijuana | CDC](#)

[Warning After Increase in Calls to Our Poison Center for Children Eating Marijuana Edibles | Upstate New York Poison Center | SUNY Upstate Medical University](#)

<https://www.ftc.gov/business-guidance/blog/2023/07/thc-edibles-look-snacks-popular-kids-ftc-fda-have-something-say-about>

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/substance-abuse/Pages/Edible-Marijuana-Dangers.aspx>

###