



Canadian Centre
on Substance Use
and Addiction

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Caution against Overconsumption Risks with Edible Cannabis Products

Ottawa, February 25, 2019 – In a brief submitted to Health Canada’s consultation on *Strict regulation of edible cannabis, extracts and topicals*, the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA) cautions that edible cannabis products present the risk of overconsumption or accidental consumption.

Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is the psychoactive component of cannabis. When a consumer ingests THC in an edible item, rather than smoking it, it takes longer for THC’s psychoactive effects to occur. The variety of edibles that can be made from cannabis, including chocolates, cookies, brownies and other common food products, also increases the risk of overconsumption or accidental consumption. As CCSA made clear in its submission to Health Canada, public awareness and education is fundamental to reducing these risks to the public.

CCSA makes a key recommendation that the amount of THC in a single unit of edible cannabis product be limited to five milligrams. Cannabis containing high levels of THC is associated with greater health risks and harms, including increased levels of impairment, dependence and experience of psychotic episodes.

“Taking a public health approach to regulating cannabis applies the same principle as taking a harm reduction approach to using cannabis: Start low and go slow,” explains Rebecca Jesseman, CCSA’s director of policy.

CCSA’s brief to the Health Canada consultation, [now available](#) on the CCSA website, covers a variety of topics that promote public health and safety. These include CCSA’s support of packaging and labelling that maximize consumer information and minimize marketing and branding. Clear, simple information using plain language about dosage is essential to reducing the risk of overconsumption.

CCSA’s non-partisan and evidence-based work informs decision-making and policy making at all levels of government across Canada.

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CCSA was created by Parliament to provide national leadership to address substance use in Canada. A trusted counsel, we provide national guidance to decision makers by harnessing the power of research, curating knowledge and bringing together diverse perspectives.

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