



Canadian Centre  
on Substance Use  
and Addiction

# Pediatric Cannabis Poisoning

## Stakeholder Toolkit





# Overview

**There has been an increase in the hospitalization of children due to accidental cannabis poisoning across Canada.**

Edible cannabis products often look nearly identical to regular treats and children can't tell the difference. While these products look harmless, they can cause serious harm to kids. We do everything we can to keep kids safe, from making sure scissors are away from children to setting up baby gates at the top of stairs — why should edibles be any different?

This toolkit contains a list of key facts and messages, social media graphics, and captions that convey the important message of keeping cannabis edibles safely stored and out of reach from children, in the same way that we do for other dangerous household items. With stakeholders like you using this toolkit to amplify our message, we can raise awareness together about pediatric cannabis poisoning and keep kids safe. Please share these messages and graphics with your networks and on your social media platforms.



# Key Facts

Cannabis legalization was associated with marked increases in hospitalizations for cannabis poisoning in children. [\(Source\)](#)

Cannabis poisoning occurs most frequently in homes. [\(Source\)](#)

Between 2015 - 2021, Canada recorded 581 hospitalizations from cannabis poisoning in children. [\(Source\)](#)

Young children with cannabis poisoning present irregular conditions such as decreased level of consciousness, respiratory depression (shallow breathing or trouble breathing), and seizures. [\(Source\)](#)

A study from the New England Journal of Medicine suggests that cannabis is now a leading cause of pediatric poisoning hospitalizations in Canada. [\(Source\)](#)

In Canada, legal edible cannabis products contain no more than 10 mg of THC, the main psychoactive substance in cannabis, per package. They must also be in plain, child-resistant packaging. [\(Source\)](#)

Cannabis edibles are appealing to toddlers because they resemble common treats such as candies, chocolates, cookies, or other baked goods.

Ontario, British Columbia, and Alberta were among the first to sell edibles when they became legal in 2020. Quebec allowed the sale of edibles in 2022 but still prohibits the sale of products that could be attractive to children and young people, including sweets, candies, desserts and chocolates. [\(Source\)](#)

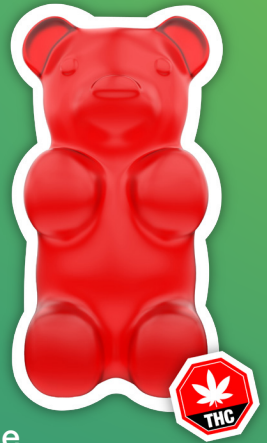
“Cannabis intoxication can have significant effects on young children, such as behavioural changes, seizures, impairment of coordination, balance and breathing, and even coma. As different cannabis formulations are legalized across the country, it is important for everyone, including parents and caregivers, to be aware of the potential harms to children and ensure cannabis products are safely stored within the home, out of children’s reach.” Dr. Yaron Finkelstein, Senior Author and Staff Physician, Pediatric Emergency Medicine and Clinical Pharmacology and Toxicology at The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids). [\(Source\)](#)





# Key Messages

- Edibles should be treated like any other dangerous household item.
- Make sure edibles are out of reach from children.
- Keep edibles away from regular food and drink.
- Store edibles in the child-resistant packaging or in a locked container.
- You keep dangerous household items away from children, why treat edibles differently?
- We do everything to keep kids safe, from locking pantries to putting foam on the corners of our furniture, why treat edibles differently?
- Avoid consuming edibles in front of children. They may think it is a regular treat and will want to do the same.
- Talk to friends and family members who consume edibles to make sure they are storing them properly.
- Since edibles look like regular treats, children may consume large quantities at one time which can cause serious health complications.
- Ensure that you are buying legal cannabis products, which have safeguards in place to protect children.
- Avoid buying edible products that come in packaging that may look like candy.
- If your child does consume a cannabis edible:
  - Call your poison control centre
  - Call 911 if the child loses consciousness or has difficulty breathing
- Learn more at:  
[www.ccsa.ca/cannabis](http://www.ccsa.ca/cannabis)



## Resources & Contact Info

To learn more, please visit our website at [www.ccsa.ca/cannabis](http://www.ccsa.ca/cannabis)  
If you have any questions, please contact us at [cannabis@ccsa.ca](mailto:cannabis@ccsa.ca)



# Social Media Assets

The following is meant to be used on your social media channels organically. Use any image below and pair it with a key message or the proposed social copy.

## Graphic



## Sample Post Copy

We make sure that children avoid dangerous situations. Why treat cannabis edibles differently? Learn more at [ccsa.ca/cannabis](https://ccsa.ca/cannabis)



We take steps around the home to prevent dangerous situations for children. Why treat edibles differently? Learn more at [ccsa.ca/cannabis](https://ccsa.ca/cannabis)



From making sure scissors are put away to babyproofing cupboards, we do everything we can to keep our kids safe. Why treat cannabis edibles differently? Learn more at [ccsa.ca/cannabis](https://ccsa.ca/cannabis)

# Social Media Assets

## Graphic



## Sample Post Copy

Cannabis edibles are poisonous for kids and can have long-term effects on their health. Be sure to keep edibles out of reach, away from other food, and in child-resistant containers. Learn more at [ccsa.ca/cannabis](https://ccsa.ca/cannabis)



Cannabis edibles are poisonous for kids and should be treated like anything else that could put their safety at risk. Make sure you and your children's caregivers store edibles out of reach from children. Learn more at [ccsa.ca/cannabis](https://ccsa.ca/cannabis)



Cannabis edibles are poisonous for kids and should be treated like anything else that could put their safety at risk. Learn more at [ccsa.ca/cannabis](https://ccsa.ca/cannabis)

# Social Media Assets

## Graphic



## Sample Post Copy

There is no difference between cannabis edibles and any other dangerous household items. Make sure to keep edibles out of reach, away from other food, and in child-resistant containers. Learn more at [ccsa.ca/cannabis](https://ccsa.ca/cannabis)



Kids can't tell the difference between regular treats and cannabis edibles. Make sure to store edibles safely and avoid consuming in front of children. Learn more at [ccsa.ca/cannabis](https://ccsa.ca/cannabis)



Cannabis edibles are poisonous for kids and should be treated like anything else that could put their safety at risk. Always remember to keep your edibles out of reach, away from other food, and in child-resistant containers. Learn more at [ccsa.ca/cannabis](https://ccsa.ca/cannabis)

# Social Media Assets

## Graphic



## Sample Post Copy

More kids are being hospitalized from cannabis poisoning. Keep kids safe and store edibles safely. Learn more at [ccsa.ca/cannabis](https://ccsa.ca/cannabis)



Cannabis edibles are poisonous for kids and can have long-term effects on their health. Be sure to keep edibles out of reach, away from other food, and in child-resistant containers. Learn more at [ccsa.ca/cannabis](https://ccsa.ca/cannabis)