

THE EDUCATOR



WESTERN CT COALITION
promoting best practices in prevention and behavioral health

A publication of the Drug Free Schools Committee, Winter 2023

The Western CT Coalition Drug Free Schools Committee consists of social workers, counselors and school-based health staff in the 43 towns of western CT. The committee assesses school-based needs related to substance use and mental health and provides education and awareness through publications and programs for students, families, and school staff. To learn more, visit [our website](#).

Edibles and High Potency THC

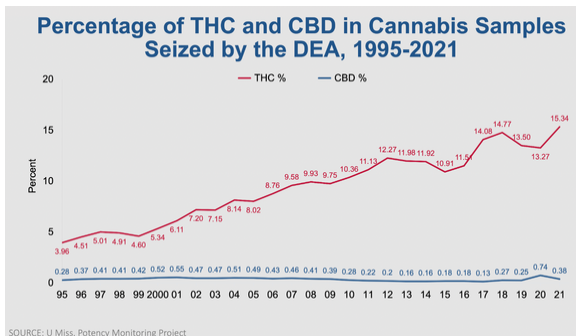
Edible Cannabis Products, commonly known as edibles, are products that contain cannabinoids that you eat or drink. **Cannabinoids** are chemical compounds found in the cannabis that affect your mind and body when consumed. **THC** (tetrahydrocannabinol) is a cannabinoid that makes an individual euphoric and intoxicated (high).

The potency of THC in cannabis is shown as a percentage of THC by weight. THC potency in dried cannabis has increased from an average of 3% in the 1980's to about 15% today. Some strains also contain as much as 30% THC.



What the Data is Telling Us

According to data collected by the Connecticut Department of Public Health in 2021, 17,000 (11.1%) of high school youth reported using cannabis in the last 30 days. An estimated 1.2 million youths aged 12-17 tried cannabis for the first time in 2017 and half of these youths said it would be easy for them to access cannabis.



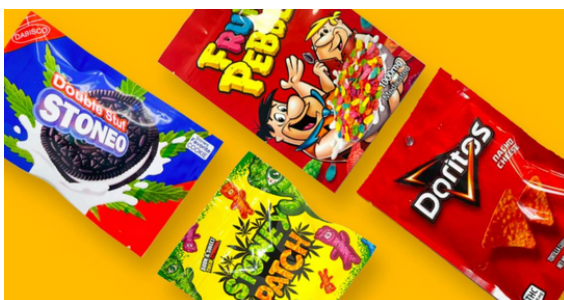
Potency of Different Types of Cannabis

Plant form or "flower": The dried flowers of the cannabis plant. (10-30% THC)

Concentrates/Extracts: More potent products like dabs, budder/badder, wax, shatter, crystalline, distillate, crumble, and sift, that are processed from the cannabis plant. (60-80% THC)

Edibles: Products that you eat or drink (50-90% THC)

The effects from edible cannabis products happen much more slowly than when an individual smokes cannabis, risking overconsumption. It can take 30 minutes to two hours to begin to feel the effects of edible cannabis and up to 4 hours to feel the full effects. These intoxicating effects can last up to 12 hours.



What is Delta-8?

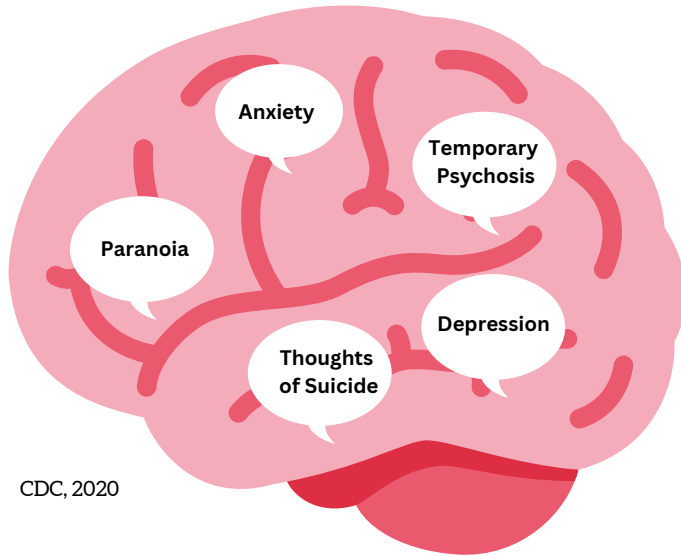
- Delta-8 THC is less potent but if you use enough, you can experience the same "high" effects as Delta-9.
- Delta-8 can be found in drinks, gummies, cookies, vapes, and blunts and is sold in convenience stores, gas stations, vape shops and CBD stores.
- In a recent press release, CT Attorney General William Tong stated "our undercover investigation revealed widespread sale of untested, unregulated, Delta-8 edibles mimicking popular youth snacks." (reference photo at right)

To learn more, click [here](#).

Sources: CDC, SAMHSA, Beintheknowct, Partnership to End Addiction

Cannabis and Mental Health

Cannabis Has Been Linked to:



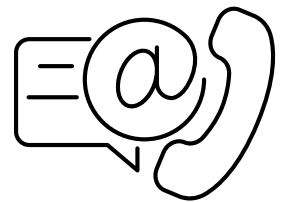
Youth Risks:

- Difficulty thinking and problem-solving
- Problems with memory and learning
- Decreases in sports performance and athletic ability
- Poor coordination
- Difficulty paying attention
- Increased irritability or aggression
- Lack of motivation which can lead to poor performance at school or work

What Family Members and Caregivers Can Do to Address Cannabis

Connect through conversation

- There is no "right age" to start talking about Cannabis
- Establish a connection, tell them how you feel about it too
- Be a good listener
- Acknowledge their point of view
- Be clear about your expectations



How to respond to your child's cannabis use

- Stay calm, yelling and threatening your child will only escalate the situation and encourage them to hide things from you in the future
- Sit and tell them how YOU feel. Use phrases such as "i'm worried because..." or "i'm afraid because..."
- Learn why your child is using (to feel good, feel better, explore, etc.)
- Offer alternatives

[Crisis Intervention Supports](#)

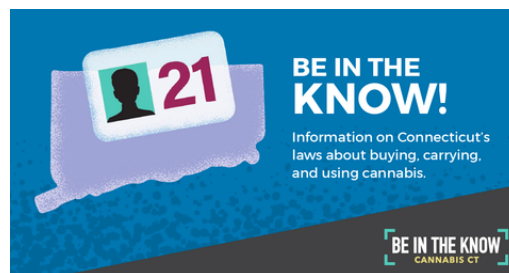
[Cannabis Addiction Helpline](#)
1-800-NCA-CALL (622-2255)

[Marijuana Anonymous](#)
Call or Text:
1-800-766-6779

[Resources for Families: \(links\)](#)

beintheknowct.org

[CT Cannabis Information](#)



Cannabis is legal for adults 21+.

Just like with tobacco and alcohol, it is illegal for anyone under 21 to purchase, use, or possess cannabis. **Legal for adults, does not mean safe for teens.** Youth, teens and young adults are at a special risk for harm from marijuana use because human brains continue to develop until age 25.

*from the Attitudes and Behaviors Surveys 2021-2022 in 5 districts