

Beware of health claims about cannabis products

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“CBD Sold Here” reads a sign in a storefront window. Another says, “Try Our Edibles.” Down the street, there’s a new marijuana dispensary.

Because cannabis-based products can be toxic to young children, the American Academy of Pediatrics reminds parents to lock these products away.

Cannabis-based plant products made from hemp and marijuana are popping up like weeds. Their ingredients are being used in oil, lotion, food, drinks, vape products and pills.

Hemp and marijuana plants both have psychoactive substances, cannabidiol (CBD) and tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). These substances affect the brain. Hemp is the nickname for a cannabis plant that has 0.3% or less of THC when dried. Marijuana is the name used for cannabis plants that contain more than 0.3% THC when dried.

If cannabis is legal in your state, beware. A recent study found that children are more likely to access and consume cannabis by mistake in states where it is legally available.

Poison centers have reported more calls about CBD. As of Aug. 31, there were 940 calls this year. This is up from 519 calls in 2018 and 118 calls two years ago.

Symptoms of CBD toxicity include extreme confusion, anxiety, paranoia, panic, fast heart rate, delusions or hallucinations, increased blood pressure and severe nausea or vomiting. Symptoms of cannabis (mainly THC) overdose include drowsiness, loss of body control, uncontrolled eye movements, low body temperature and muscle weakness.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is gathering information about problems related to cannabis. It offers several warnings.

- Even if they are legal under state law, “medical” and recreational cannabis products are not legal under federal law.
- Some products contain more or less CBD or THC than labeled, and there is no way to tell if the product is contaminated with a harmful ingredient.
- Only one CBD-based medication is FDA-approved. This drug is used for children with two rare types of epilepsy. The FDA has not yet approved any other cannabis-based medication for pediatric diseases.

The FDA has not approved over-the-counter cannabis products for the diagnosis, cure, treatment or prevention of any disease. The FDA urges parents to seek medical treatment if they suspect their child has accidentally consumed a cannabis-based product.

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