



A Parent's Guide to Cannabis Edibles: What You Need to Know

This guide is brought to you through a partnership between the Carmel Central School District, Prevention Council of Putnam and the Carmel Communities That Care Coalition, united by a shared mission: **to educate and empower parents and caregivers with accurate, practical information to help keep children safe and healthy.**

As cannabis products become more widely available and socially accepted, it is essential for families to understand the risks, laws, and safety concerns, especially when it comes to edibles. These products often look like every day snacks, making them particularly appealing and dangerous to young people.

Our goal is to provide clear, research-based guidance so you can make informed decisions, start meaningful conversations with your children, and create a safe environment at home.

Together, we can help prevent accidental ingestion, misuse, and the potential long-term consequences associated with cannabis use in youth.

What Are Cannabis Edibles?

Cannabis edibles are food or drink products infused with THC, the psychoactive compound in cannabis. Common examples include gummies, chocolates, baked goods, and beverages. Unlike smoking, edibles are absorbed through digestion, which changes how THC affects the body.

How Edibles Work

- **Delayed Onset:** Effects can take **30 minutes to 2 hours** to appear.
- **Longer Duration:** The high may last **4–12 hours**, much longer than smoking.
- **Unpredictable Dosing:** THC levels can vary widely, making it easy to consume too much.

Risks for Children

- **Accidental Poisonings Are Rising:** ER visits for children under six have surged since legalization.
- **Severe Symptoms:** Even small doses can cause vomiting, confusion, rapid heart rate, seizures, and in rare cases, coma.
- **Delayed Detection:** Because effects take time, children may ingest large amounts before symptoms appear.

Why Edibles Appeal to Kids

- **Candy-Like Packaging:** Bright colors and familiar snack designs make edibles look harmless.
- **Misleading Labels:** Words like "vegan" or "locally made" can make products seem healthy.

Impact on Teens

- **Brain Development:** The brain does not fully develop until about age 25. THC can affect memory, attention, and learning.
- **Mental Health Risks:** Heavy use may increase risks of depression, anxiety, and psychosis.

