

What You Need to Know About Youth & Intoxicating Hemp-derived Products

WHAT IS HEMP?

Hemp and marijuana are both forms of the cannabis plant. The cannabis plant contains more than 100 compounds (or cannabinoids).¹ These compounds include tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), which is impairing or mind-altering, as well as other active compounds, such as cannabidiol (CBD). CBD is not impairing, meaning it does not cause a “high.” Hemp is defined as any part of the cannabis plant that contains no more than 0.3% delta-9 THC, or the main form of THC, on a dry weight basis. Marijuana, on the other hand, contains more than 0.3% delta-9 THC on a dry weight basis.²

The federal government legalized hemp in 2018. Hemp can be used for many products including fabrics, rope, plastic alternatives, and more.³ CBD can also be extracted from hemp. For more information about youth and CBD, see [What You Need to Know About Youth & CBD](#).

INTOXICATING HEMP-DERIVED PRODUCTS

While delta-9 THC is the most widely known form of THC, it is not the only form of THC, nor the only psychoactive compound produced from hemp. The following are other intoxicating hemp-derived products:

Delta-8 THC: Estimated to produce 50%-75% of the level of impairment of Delta-9 THC.² Delta-8 THC products have not been tested or approved for safe use under any circumstances by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). They have been the subject of numerous adverse reports to both the FDA and the American Association of Poison Control Centers.

Delta-10 THC: A less commonly known form of THC that can be taken from hemp in a lab setting. Delta-10 THC has not been tested or approved for safe use under any circumstances by the FDA.

Hexadrydocannabinol (HHC): A compound produced from hemp and marketed, but not approved for safe use.³

THC-O Acetate (THC-O): A compound produced from hemp and marketed, but not approved for safe use.³

HOW DO PEOPLE USE INTOXICATING HEMP-DERIVED PRODUCTS?

Intoxicating hemp-derived products come in various forms including vaping cartridges or oils, edibles and beverages and products that can be smoked like joints.³ While some state-specific policies exist, there are no specific federal regulations for hemp packaging and labeling. Packaging on certain intoxicating hemp-derived products may appeal to children and look like other non-cannabis products. The packaging on these products may not be childproof, and intoxicating hemp product labels may not fully list the ingredients or cannabinoids. There is also no required federal testing for intoxicating hemp-derived products, which is particularly concerning given that various products may be added during product conversion from CBD to THC. Currently, testing only ensures that the dried flower used to produce the product has no more than 0.3% delta-9 THC when it is harvested.³

ARE INTOXICATING HEMP-DERIVED PRODUCTS SAFE?

The FDA⁴ and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention⁵ have issued alerts about adverse events associated with use of intoxicating hemp-derived products. The process used to convert CBD from hemp into these products may create harmful by-products that presently are not well-characterized. Intoxicating hemp-derived products are largely unregulated, not systematically tested for additives or contaminants and often lack labeling or are mislabeled with respect to product contents. Researchers have tested delta-8 THC products and uncovered heavy metals, contaminants and other compounds that could not be identified.³

ARE INTOXICATING HEMP-DERIVED PRODUCTS LEGAL?

The definition of hemp is written in terms of delta-9 THC only and does not mention other forms of THC or other cannabinoids.² This has created legal uncertainty around intoxicating hemp-derived products. Some states have modified their cannabis laws to restrict the sale of delta-8 THC specifically or of any intoxicating hemp-derived products.³

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF INTOXICATING HEMP-DERIVED PRODUCTS? DO THEY AFFECT THE BRAIN?

Hemp products with various forms of THC can cause impairing and psychotropic effects. THC use can have harmful effects on the developing brains of children and youth.⁶ Intoxicating hemp-derived products can slow reaction time, impair the ability to make decisions, cause dizziness and disorientation and impair motor coordination. All side effects can increase the risk of injury – particularly while driving or operating heavy machinery. Research is still underway to understand the effects of intoxicating hemp-derived products on the brain.



REFERENCES

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