

An Overlooked Threat to Public Safety

What are Derived Psychoactive Cannabis Products (DPCPs)?

DPCPs have psychoactive properties similar to cannabis, but they are chemically derived, not grown.

Because of a loophole created by the 2018 Farm Bill (i.e., Agriculture Improvement Act), these compounds are regulated as “hemp” despite their psychoactive properties (because they have < 0.3% Δ -9 by weight).¹⁻³ This loophole also legalizes Δ -9 THC edibles, as the product weight allows for a high dose of THC.¹

One in six past-month cannabis users (17%) used Δ -8 THC, the first DPCP to enter the market.⁴

DPCPs carry risk of harm, especially to young people.^{1,5-7}

Most states do not require testing for chemical contaminants, even though DPCPs are commonly synthesized using harsh solvents known to be hazardous to human health.¹ Potency limits are rare, despite conclusive evidence that more potent products carry higher risk of harms.¹ Research supports that DPCP use is associated with acute psychiatric, lung, chest and heart disorders, as well as injuries and poisonings.⁵

DPCPs are also very new, so we don't know all the short- and long-term risks from use.¹ DPCPs are consumed accidentally by children, as evidenced by the large number of calls to Poison Control Centers involving minors because of poor labeling and a lack of child-proof containers.⁶ These products are marketed to young people. Some DPCP product packaging mimics well-known food brands that appeal to children, including Cap'n Crunch, Cocoa Puffs, Froot Loops, Nerds Ropes, Starbursts and Sour Patch Kids, among others.¹⁰

Availability and Access

DPCPs are available in every state, including those that have banned certain DPCPs such as Δ -8 THC.^{1,2} This is because the loophole allows for the continuous engineering of new types of DPCPs, including Δ -6 THC, Δ -10 THC, Δ -11 THC, THC-A, THC-O, THC-P, THC-V, THC-JD, PHC, HHC, HHC-P and HXC.²

Some of these new DPCPs are marketed as being far more potent than cannabis. DPCPs are easy to buy online: age verification measures are rarely used and easily circumvented.⁸ In many states, there are no age laws, so it is up to the retailers whether to sell DPCPs to children.^{1,9}

DPCPs are marketed in ways that are extremely likely to attract children, such as added in candy, chips and chocolates. DPCPs are inexpensive (sometimes < \$5), and stores are disproportionately located in low-income areas.⁹



No psychoactive drug should be sold as “hemp.”

The 2023 Farm Bill should close the loophole that helps kids access unregulated, psychoactive candy.

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