

**SUBSTANCE ABUSE ALERT
#WV003**

TO: Hospital emergency departments, community health providers, law enforcement agencies, Director, WV Emergency Medical Services, Regional Medical Directors, emergency medical services personnel, local health departments, WV Office of Drug Control Policy, WV Office of Epidemiology and Prevention Services, State Epidemiology Outcomes Workgroup members, local health departments, WV Board of Education

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DISTRIBUTION: As deemed appropriate within each agency receiving this alert

Reported Cases of Adverse Reactions to Delta-8-THC Products in West Virginia

Description:

Delta-8-THC is a cannabinoid component of *Cannabis sativa* that is a double bond isomer of Delta-9-THC, the psychotropic component of marijuana. It can be synthesized from CBD. Its actions on the body are not similar to CBD. Although less psychotropic than delta-9-THC, it does have psychotropic properties and is marketed for its psychotropic effects in fruit flavored candy gummies and vape solution.

It is promoted as being legal since it is not delta-9-THC and can be extracted and concentrated from the CBD in the hemp plant. However, some would argue that the fact it has to be synthesized into its final form puts its legality into question.

Demographics:

In March 2021, two cases of adverse reactions to Delta-8-THC products were reported in adults. In both cases it was mistaken for a product like CBD. In neighboring states, cases are also being reported that have included children requiring Intensive Care Unit admissions after exposure.

In addition to people having unintended consequences from what they thought was CBD, this drug will appeal to adults and adolescents seeking a "legal high". The fruit-flavored gummies are attractive to small children.

Patient Presentation:

Practitioners should be on the lookout for patients presenting with marijuana-like symptoms who do not report/or a parent or caregiver does not report, a marijuana exposure. Symptomatic individuals should be asked about their use of CBD or delta-8-THC products.

Delta-8-THC does not elute in the same place as delta-9-THC so the ability to detect, and cross reactivity with the different laboratory tests that hospitals use to detect delta-9-THC, is not characterized fully.

There is no specific antidote. The West Virginia Poison Center is available 24 hours a day for toxicology consultations.

Reporting:

Please report cases of acute delta-8-THC toxicity to the WV Office of Drug Control Policy as you would overdoses from other drugs of abuse.

This message was directly distributed by the West Virginia Poison Center on behalf of the Substance Abuse Early Warning Network (a product of the WV State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup and the WV Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities). Receiving entities are responsible for further dissemination of the information as appropriate to the target audience.

Message Categories:

Network Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance, warrants immediate action or attention.

Network Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation.

Network Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation.