

## Wellness Articles

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An archive of past wellness articles is available at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/9966.asp>

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## Cannabis edibles aren't risk-free

Baked goods (e.g., cookies), beverages, and candies, including chocolates, soft-chews and mints, are the latest cannabis products to arrive in Alberta cannabis stores.

What do you need to be aware of if you're planning to use them?

If you are using cannabis, edible products provide an alternative to smoking.

Edible cannabis may affect you differently compared to smoked or vaped cannabis. Here are a few steps you can take to reduce your risks.

- First, consider the amount of THC in each product. Choose products that have 2.5 mg of THC or less, especially if you are a new or occasional cannabis user. This information can be found on the label.
- It can take up to four hours to feel the full effects of edible cannabis. Taking more within that time can increase the risk of adverse effects. Be patient, start low and go slow.
- Edibles may affect you for up to 12 and even 24 hours. Be aware that you may be impaired for a significant time.
- Avoid mixing cannabis with alcohol or other drugs, as mixing can significantly increase the risk of over-intoxication and impairment.
- If you have existing health conditions or are on medications, talk to your pharmacist or doctor before using any type of cannabis.
- Make sure you are with people you trust, who can help you if you have unpleasant or unexpected results, and that you are in a familiar environment when you first eat cannabis.

- There is no known safe amount or form of cannabis to use while pregnant or breastfeeding. The chemicals in cannabis may affect your baby's brain development and may result in learning and behavioural issues that last throughout their life.
- Store cannabis products and other drugs (including alcohol, tobacco and tobacco-like products) in their original packaging, locked up and out of sight of children or pets.
- Edible cannabis products increase the risk of unintentional consumption and cannabis poisoning in children, as they may be mistaken for regular food or drinks. If a child is exposed to cannabis and shows signs of distress, contact Poison & Drug Information Service (PADIS) (toll-free 1-800-332-1414) or Health Link (call 811 or 1-866-408-5465 for Internet phone users).
- A bad reaction to cannabis may include a rapid heartbeat, anxiety, confusion, vomiting or more serious effects such as psychotic episodes or seizures. If you have these side effects, call your doctor or seek medical help.

If you are concerned about your own or someone else's use of cannabis, alcohol, or other drugs, contact Health Link at 811 (1-866- 408-5465 for Internet phone users) or the Addiction Helpline at 1-866-332-2322.