

# 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%  $\Delta$ -9 by weight).<sup>1-3</sup> This loophole also legalizes  $\Delta$ -9 THC edibles, as the product weight allows for a high dose of THC.<sup>1</sup>

One in six past-month cannabis users (17%) used  $\Delta$ -8 THC, the first DPCP to enter the market.<sup>4</sup>

## DPCPs carry risk of harm, especially to young people.<sup>1,5-7</sup>

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.<sup>1</sup> Potency limits are rare, despite conclusive evidence that more potent products carry higher risk of harms.<sup>1</sup> Research supports that DPCP use is associated with acute psychiatric, lung, chest and heart disorders, as well as injuries and poisonings.<sup>5</sup>

DPCPs are also very new, so we don't know all the short- and long-term risks from use.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup>

## Availability and Access

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

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.<sup>8</sup> In many states, there are no age laws, so it is up to the retailers whether to sell DPCPs to children.<sup>1,9</sup>

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.<sup>9</sup>



## 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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