

# Keep Kids Safe from Medical Marijuana

According to a Colorado study, more children have accidentally ingested marijuana since states legalized medical marijuana. Doctors expect similar effects in other states as medical marijuana becomes legal. Children have a greater risk of contact as the drug becomes more available.

Today's medical marijuana is a more dangerous drug than the marijuana used years ago. The cause is the active ingredient THC that has risen from 2% to 8%.

Among the several forms and products that contain medical marijuana are cookies, candy, brownies and soft drinks. All of these products attract kids. In fact, they are foods usually present in all homes.

Children can have serious reactions to medical marijuana. The effects of unintentional ingestion include:

- Stimulation with hallucinations and illusions,
- Dizziness,
- Troubled walking,
- Lethargy, and
- Breathing problems.

Exposure often requires a hospital stay.

The diagnosis can be a difficult one if the doctor does not know marijuana ingestion was a possible cause. Some parents have a fear of telling the doctor that medical marijuana could be the cause. Others may not expect exposure if the child got it at a friend's house.

Everyone shares a role in protecting kids from gaining access to medical marijuana. Parents, however, bear the most responsibility. Whether in your home or someone else's home, take steps to keep your child safe.

If you have medical marijuana in your home, practice these safety tips.

1. Label it clearly.
2. Store it in a safe place, out of sight and hard to access.
3. Lock it in a medicine box or cabinet.
4. Restore the container to the locked place **before** using the medical marijuana.
5. Discuss medical marijuana safety with your child. Explain its use and risks.
6. Call the Poison Control Center – 800-222-1222 – if your child has eaten a medical marijuana product.
7. Provide the facts about the use of medical marijuana if you seek treatment from your child's doctor or in an ER.



*Brought to you by Parent Help Line at HSHS St. John's Children's Hospital  
to help keep kids safe, healthy and happy.*



Call the Parent Help Line. Help is just a phone call away.

1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889  
10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week  
[www.parenthelpline.org](http://www.parenthelpline.org)

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