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NEW MEXICO HEALTH ALERT NETWORK (HAN) ALERT

Pediatric Ingestion of Cannabis Products

March 31, 2022

Background:

Cannabis products may pose a risk of unintentional ingestion by young children or excess use by adolescents in regions where cannabis use is legal or decriminalized. The adult use cannabis market in New Mexico will begin sales Friday April 1, 2022. In children, acute cannabis intoxication typically occurs after exploratory ingestion of a highly concentrated edible product intended for adult use. Even after limited exposure, children may display sleepiness, euphoria, irritability, and other changes in behavior. Nausea, vomiting, conjunctival injection, nystagmus, ataxia, and (in verbal children) slurred speech may also be present.

Recommendations for Clinicians:

- Be aware that diagnosing of cannabis intoxication in young children based solely on clinical criteria can be difficult because history of exposure is often lacking, and the symptoms of cannabis exposure are nonspecific.
- Urine drug screens may be useful to confirm the diagnosis. A positive result in a symptomatic child may represent an acute exposure.
- Studies on ingestion of edible products by children showed symptoms of tachycardia (91%), hypotension (75%), lethargy (59%), ataxia (50%), confusion (34%), and bradypnea (34%). Tremors and seizures can occur in children.
- Be aware that all exposures may not be unintentional.
- Ask how product was stored prior to exposure.
- Ask if exposure has occurred before.
- Educate parents/guardians on how to properly secure cannabis products including storing the product in its original packaging and the use of a lockbox.
- **Call the NM poison control center hotline (1-800-222-1222) for medical management advice and to report suspect cases.** Please have the following information available, if possible, when contacting poison control:
 - Product Name
 - Purchase Location
 - Formulation (e.g., Gummies, Vape, Tincture)
 - Dose (THC concentration)
 - Type of packaging (Child Resistant, Bag, Container)

Additional Resources:

American Association of Poison Control Centers - <https://www.aapcc.org/>

CDC Marijuana Homepage - <https://www.cdc.gov/marijuana/health-effects/poisoning.html>

NMDOH Medical Cannabis Program Homepage - <https://www.nmhealth.org/about/mcp/svcs/>

Kaczor EE, Mathews B, LaBarge K Chapman BP, Carreiro S. Product Ingestions in Pediatric Patients: Ranges of Exposure, Effects, and Outcomes. J. Med. Toxicol. (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13181-021-00849-0>

New Mexico Health Alert Network: To register for the NM Health Alert Network, please visit the following site <https://nm.readyop.com/fs/4cjZ/10b2> Please fill out the registration form completely and click Submit at the bottom of the page, to begin receiving Important health alerts, advisories, and updates.

Please Note that our system also utilizes text messaging to notify members of important health information. Due to FCC Regulation changes that are designed to decrease the amount of unwanted spam text messages sent each year to citizens, please save, this phone number **(855) 596-1810** as the **“New Mexico Health Alert Network”** default phone number for your account used for text messages on the mobile device(s) you register with us.

EPIDEMIOLOGY AND RESPONSE

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