

# DELTA 8: What is it? What are the concerns?

Get the Facts! From the Blue Ridge Poison Center at UVA Health

## What is delta 8?

'Delta 8' is a short name for delta-8 tetrahydrocannabinol, or delta-8 THC. It is one of many cannabinoids, or chemical compounds found naturally in cannabis plants. You may be more familiar with another cannabinoid: delta-9 THC, the chemical compound responsible for cannabis' psychoactive properties. Delta-8 THC and delta-9 THC are chemically very similar. Other untested cannabinoids such as delta-10 THC are popping up in products now, too.



## Does delta-8 THC also have psychoactive properties?

Yes. However the amount of delta-8 THC found naturally in cannabis plants is very small; not enough to cause any noticeable effects. The only way to experience any effects from delta-8 THC is to extract it from the plant and concentrate it. This is a difficult and expensive process involving several harsh chemicals.

## What is hemp, and what does it have to do with delta-8 THC?

Hemp is a cannabis plant, but it only contains 0.3% or less of delta-9 THC by dry weight. Hemp also contains very small amounts of delta-8 THC. Because these levels are so low, hemp does not have any psychoactive properties. In other words, smoking, vaping, or eating hemp cannot cause a 'high.'

In 2018 it became legal to grow hemp when Congress passed the U.S. Farm Bill. Today, people farm hemp to make products like rope, clothing, animal feed, and more. Hemp is also a source of cannabidiol (CBD). Legalizing hemp created a 'loophole' for manufacturers to extract its delta-8 THC, concentrate it, and add it to products that could be eaten, smoked, or vaped. For a while, this was legal because neither hemp nor delta-8 THC were illegal substances. **Today, delta-8 is considered an illegal food adulterant and is therefore an illicit substance.**



The Blue Ridge Poison Center at UVA Health  
1-800-222-1222 [www.brpc.virginia.edu](http://www.brpc.virginia.edu)  
Treatment. Education. Prevention.

## Delta-8 (continued from front)

### What are the health concerns?

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) received numerous reports about people experiencing adverse health effects from using products that contain delta-8 THC. Likewise, poison control centers across the country, including the Blue Ridge Poison Center, saw an increase in calls about problems with delta-8 THC. Adverse effects reported include:

- Nausea and vomiting
- Difficulty moving and speaking
- Hallucinations
- Anxiety and increased heart rate
- Loss of consciousness

### Why does delta-8 THC cause so many problems?

- These products are unregulated, meaning they have not been evaluated, tested, or approved by the FDA to be safe or effective.
- When tested in a lab, many delta-8 products are revealed to be contaminated with solvents, acids, heavy metals, mold, and other harmful chemicals.
- There is a lack of testing. We don't understand a lot about how delta 8 THC affects the brain. People are consuming delta-8 THC in amounts much higher than found in nature and the long term effects of this are unknown.

### Children are at risk

Like many cannabis products, delta-8 THC edibles often resemble candy, baked goods, or other delicious treats. Children cannot tell the difference. Even the packaging is tempting. For example: the bag on the left contains real candy. The bag on the right contains a delta-8 THC product.



WHO CAN HELP? Specially trained nurses and doctors are standing by 24 hours a day, every day. Call the **Blue Ridge Poison Center: 1-800-222-1222**. Free and confidential.

**Scan the code, save the number. You could save a life.**