

Edibles: Alert for Professionals, May 2021

There is concern locally about the use of edibles by a small number of young people which has resulted in some requiring medical assistance. . We are writing to

- raise multi-agency awareness of these products
- alert professionals to the potential signs and symptoms following consumption of edible cannabis to ensure effective triage of these young people
- ensure you have information on how to support children and young people who may have access to them.

What are edibles?

Edibles are food products that may contain cannabis. There are many forms of edibles, including sweets, gummies and lollipops. They usually contain – or are marketed as containing - a number of chemicals, many of which are harmful and controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971) including tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). THC is the psychoactive compound in cannabis and can make people feel a range of effects, while cannabidiol (CBD) is the non- psychoactive chemical compound which does not have the same effect. Any CBD product containing THC is illegal in the UK.

The sweet versions are widely available on the internet and via social media and may be easily accessed by young people. The packaging is often deliberately targeted to attract young people. There is NO quality control of these products.

What are we worried about?

The amount of cannabis in these products can vary greatly and sometimes other harmful drugs are added too. The effects of consuming edibles are unpredictable and it can be very easy to accidentally take a larger dose. Edibles take between 1-3 hours to have an effect because food is absorbed into the bloodstream through the liver. Because it takes longer, the person taking them may end up consuming larger amounts of the drug while thinking the drug isn't working. As edibles may look like other products, there is also the risk someone may ingest them without realising they contain drugs - this could include other children in the home.

Displayed side effects may include:

- paranoia
- nausea
- hyperactivity
- elevated heart rate
- hallucinations
- impaired mobility
- panic attacks

What can you do?

We recommend monitoring food packaging/ wrappers, looking for wording such as CBD or THC suggesting the items are cannabis oil infused.

Please be mindful of the medical needs should a child present with symptoms, or if you suspect they have consumed a drug-laced substance. **In a medical emergency call 999.**

If you have any local information or intelligence please share it with
drugliaisonofficers@surrey.pnn.police.uk

Local service:

[Catch22, Surrey Young People's Substance Misuse Service](#) is a county-wide specialist treatment service for young people aged up to 25. They offer free and confidential advice and support as well as training for professionals.

Tel: 01372 832905

Out of hours helpline: 0800 622 6662

Text: ypsm@catch-22.org.uk

Websites:

The following websites are really helpful sources of information for children, young people, and their parents and carers:

[Talk to FRANK](#) – the government's drug advice website/helpline and their specific page on cannabis - <https://www.talktofrank.com/drug/cannabis>

For friendly, confidential advice, Talk to FRANK on 0300 1236600.

[Healthy Surrey](#) – an up-to-date directory of health services operating within Surrey.

Schools in Surrey:

Surrey Healthy Schools take a preventative and graduated approach to supporting young people and their families. The approach builds upon a supportive school culture, ensuring an effective PSHE curriculum (including effective and age appropriate drug education), access to activities, the development of healthy eating behaviours and a focus upon emotional wellbeing and mental health. [Surrey Healthy Schools 2020-21 - Healthy Surrey](#)

Surrey Healthy Schools also link to services like **Catch 22**. Ensuring an effective **Drug Education Policy** supports a school's practice is an essential aspect of the Surrey Healthy Schools approach.

Referrals:

If you are concerned about the safety of a child or young person you can contact the Surrey Children's Single Point of Access (SPA). [Contact Children's Services - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#)

Edibles Packaging Examples



Thank you to the Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership for allowing us to replicate their information.