

Delta-8 THC

KEY FACTS

- **Delta-8 THC products are increasingly available and popular among the public.**
- **Delta-8 THC products are not regulated by the FDA and have not been evaluated for safety, efficacy, or to evaluate for any therapeutic effects.**
- **There are very few studies that have evaluated the short-term and long-term effects of delta-8 THC, but there are documented harmful effects including hospitalizations associated with its use.**
- **Delta-8 THC may cause positive results for delta-9 THC on urine drug screens.**

What is delta-8 THC and what are its effects?

The cannabis plant contains more than 100 different cannabinoids, or chemical substances, including tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD).¹ Delta-9 THC is the commonly known main psychoactive component of cannabis. Delta-8 THC is another type of cannabinoid found within the cannabis plant. Delta-8 THC is structurally similar to delta-9 THC.² Manufacturers make delta-8 THC products from CBD without regulation or safety monitoring of the products.¹ Some manufacturers may use dangerous chemicals to make delta-8 THC, and products often contain contaminants like lead and other heavy metals.³

The health effects of delta-8 THC are not well understood and there is limited research on its effects.¹ Delta-8 THC is reported by some to have milder effects than delta-9 THC, but there is not good evidence to support this claim. Delta-8 THC has psychoactive effects and has been reported to cause irritability, difficulty with concentration and memory, euphoria, sedation, and coma.^{1,4,5} Because there is no regulation of the ingredients, potency, or safety of delta-8 THC products, those who use the products may be exposed to other chemicals without knowing it and that may pose a health risk. Delta-8 THC overdose can require breathing support and admission to the hospital. There have been increasing reports to poison control centers and hospitalizations after intentional and accidental exposure to delta-8 THC, including in children.^{1,6}

References

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5. Kruger et al. J of Cannabis Research. 2022. 4:4.
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How is delta-8 THC used and why do people use it?

Delta-8 THC is currently sold in many forms, including vape products that are inhaled, and gummies, candies, and other edibles that are ingested by mouth. Delta-8 THC can be purchased in headshops, gas stations, or online. People may choose to use delta-8 THC for its psychoactive effects, including reported relaxation and euphoria.⁵ Delta-8 THC is often promoted by sellers or sold in packaging as “weed light,” “CBD,” or “hemp,” which may lead people to believe it does not have intoxicating effects. Some people report using it to self-treat mental health conditions. It has been found that delta-8 THC vape products do not contain the amount that is labeled on the package and may also contain delta-9 THC. Others may not realize that what they are using contains delta-8 THC due to the lack of proper labeling.¹ These products often resemble candy or other tempting edibles, which can put young children and adolescents at a high risk for accidental ingestion.

What is the legal status of delta-8 THC and is it detected on urine drug screens?

As of November 15, 2022, delta-8 THC is included as a hemp-derived cannabinoid in KY, making products containing delta-8 THC legal to sell as long as the product does not contain more than 0.03% delta-9 THC.⁷ Although 0.3% is the legal limit for delta-9 THC in hemp-derived products, many products exceed this and may contain a total quantity of delta-9 THC that is very high.⁸ Several states have banned delta-8 THC products for this reason. Further, because delta-8 THC is structurally similar to delta-9 THC, there are reports that use of delta-8 THC may show up as positive for THC on a urine drug screen. Employers that require urine drug screening may not be able to tell the difference between delta-8 and delta-9 THC from a urine test.