

TODAY Show: Edible marijuana that looks like candy is sending kids to the ER

By Jeff Rossen and Jovanna Billington
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In Oregon, an 8-year-old boy was rushed to the hospital after finding a marijuana cookie at a park. In Michigan, two children were sent to the ER after getting into a man's stash of gummy candy containing THC, the main psychoactive component in marijuana.

Marijuana is now legal for either recreational or medical use in 24 states and the District of Columbia. But "edibles" containing marijuana are spreading everywhere, and kids are getting hurt from California to New York. Last year alone, poison control facilities across the country reported 4,000 kids and teens exposed to marijuana.

"This is extremely dangerous," Dr. Robert Glatter, an emergency room physician at New York City's Lenox Hill Hospital, told TODAY national investigative correspondent Jeff Rossen. "When young children get ahold of these products, they can have severe reactions, including nausea, vomiting, disorientation, anxiety-like reactions and even psychotic reactions that can make them do things they wouldn't normally do."

The Rossen Reports team legally purchased edibles in Denver, then challenged kids and parents alike to tell the difference between them and regular candy. The results were revealing.

"You have little kids that accidentally get into this stuff; they don't know any better," said Sgt. Jim Gerhardt of the Colorado Drug Investigators Association. "Or a baby sitter might give a child something out of the pantry, not realizing what it is. Those accidental issues are on the rise, and it's a big problem."

Police warn that kids could end up bringing edibles to school and sharing them with their friends, unaware of what they really are. So even if they aren't in your home, your children could accidentally ingest them.

"Kids are going to be enticed by this," Gerhardt said. "They're going to want to get into this stuff. Banning it's the only way to deal with it."

Call Poison Control to talk to an expert: 1-800-222-1222.