



Substance Use Prevention Program

Unhoused Service Providers Network

02/25/2026

Sponsored by the California Department of Public Health, Contract #22-11116.

Substance Use Prevention Program Team



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He/Him/His

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Fellow, Tobacco & Substance Use
Prevention

Substance Use Prevention Policy Program

ONE OF THE NEWEST PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMS

Works with elected officials, community leaders, and other stakeholders to prevent underage substance use by promoting policies that reduce underage access to alcohol and cannabis.

FUNDING SOURCES: Behavioral Health Services Department (BHSD)
California Department of Public Health (CDPH)

Santa Clara County
**PUBLIC
HEALTH**

Program Focus Areas



**Community
Education**



**Policy Technical
Assistance**



**Youth Participatory
Action Research**





Agenda

- **Vaping & Health Effects**
- **What is Cannabis?**
- **What is Synthetic Cannabis?**
- **Alcohol Policy**
- **Tobacco and Substance Use Program Overview**
- **Questions and Comments**

Vaping



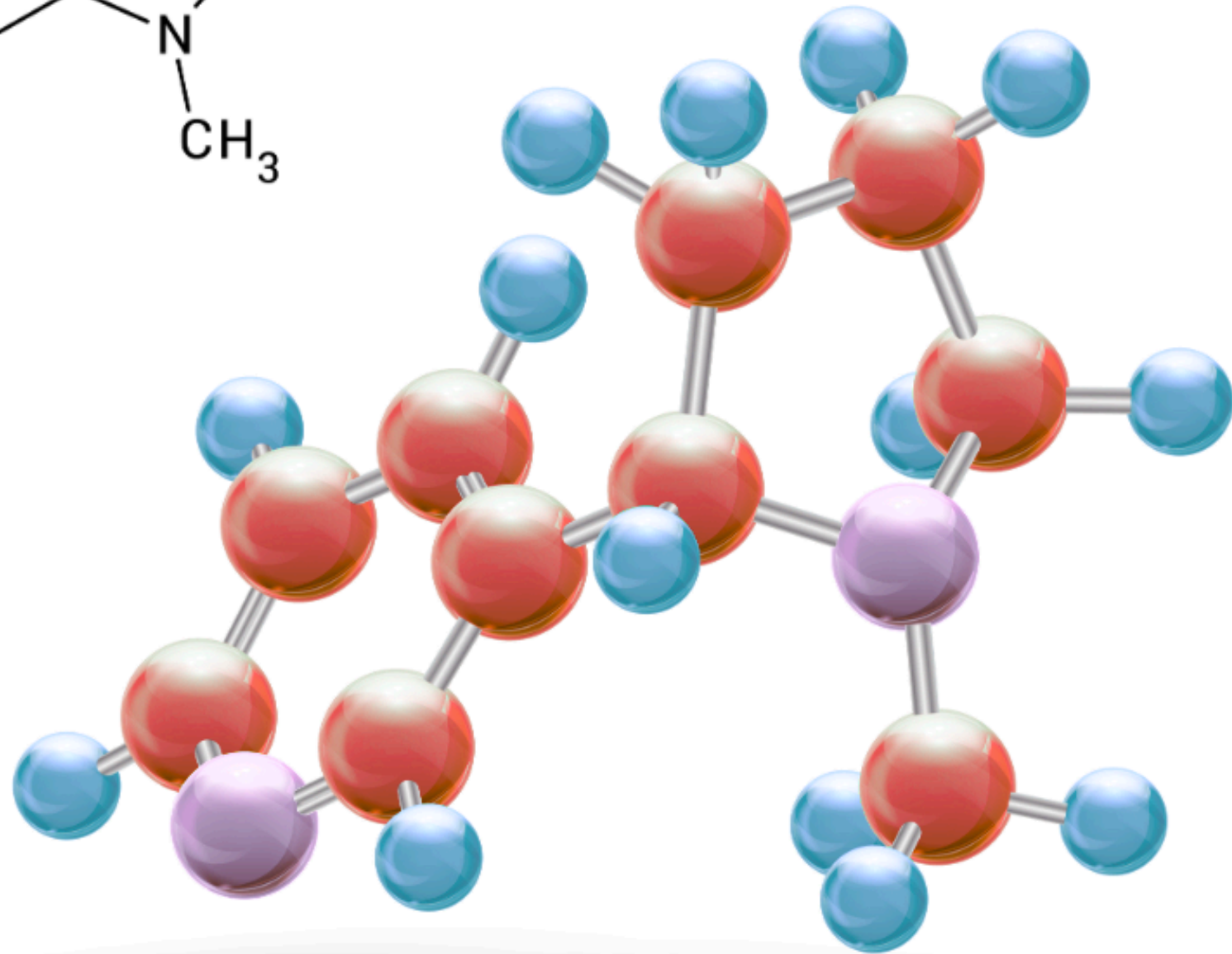
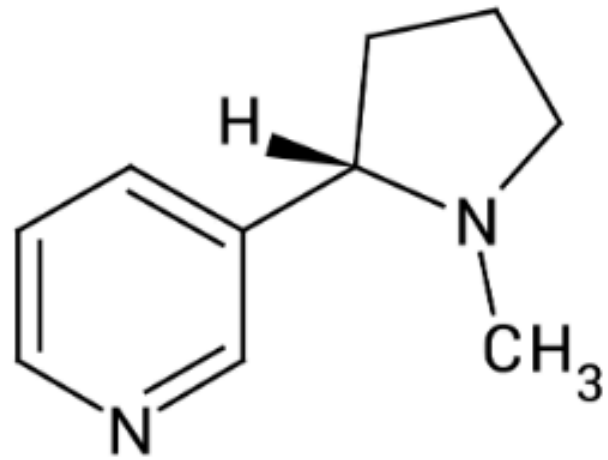
Vapes

- Vapes are small, battery-powered devices that heat a liquid to produce an inhalable aerosol
- They have cartridges with “e-juice” that contain nicotine, flavorings, and various other chemicals
- When the vape is used, it heats up and forms more toxic chemicals that the user then inhales
- Many of the vape flavors in the market are geared towards younger individuals



Source: American Lung Association

What is nicotine?



- Naturally occurring chemical compound
- Stimulant
- Main psychoactive substance in tobacco products
- Highly addictive
- Causes changes in brain chemistry

Nicotine and the Brain



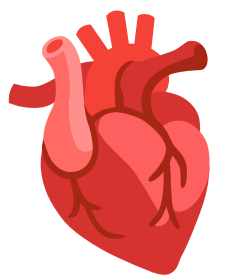
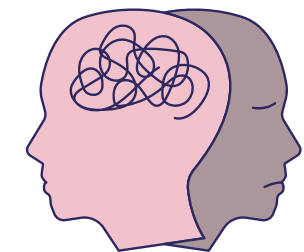
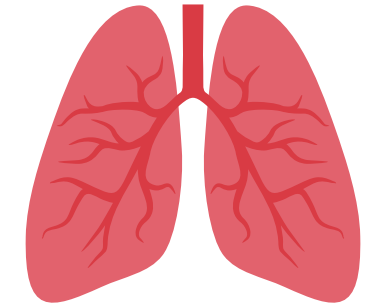
Stimulates pleasure centers and alters the normal brain function



When nicotine levels in the brain drop, the brain craves nicotine to feel pleasure and relieve feelings of anxiety and stress

Health Risks of Vaping

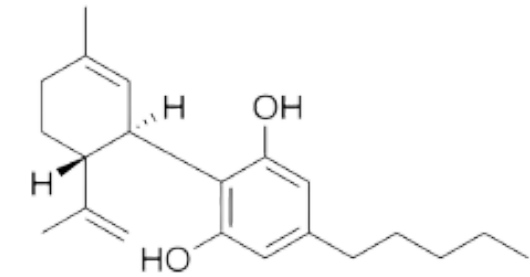
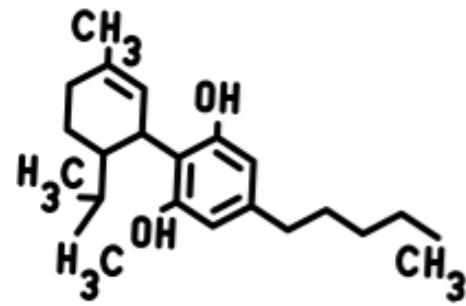
- The aerosols produced by chemicals in the e-juice enter into the lungs unfiltered and leave chemical residue behind
- Nicotine use in early adolescence causes changes in the brain that make lifelong addiction much more likely among e-cig/vape users
- Nicotine effects on the developing brains include mood disorders and increased risk of cancer and cardiovascular disease
- Ear, eye, and throat irritation is common among vape/e-cig users



A close-up photograph of vibrant green cannabis leaves with serrated edges. The leaves are densely packed and fill most of the frame. In the center, there is a white rounded rectangular box containing the word "Cannabis" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the image, there is a horizontal bar divided into three colored segments: blue on the left, green in the middle, and orange on the right.

Cannabis

Cannabis Vocabulary



Cannabis

Refers to dried flowers, leaves, stems, and seeds of *cannabis sativa* L plant.

Scientific plant name

Marijuana

Often used interchangeably with cannabis, weed, pot, kush.

Psychoactive drug containing THC

THC

Psychoactive compound; gives cannabis users a feeling of “being high”

Tetrahydrocannabinol

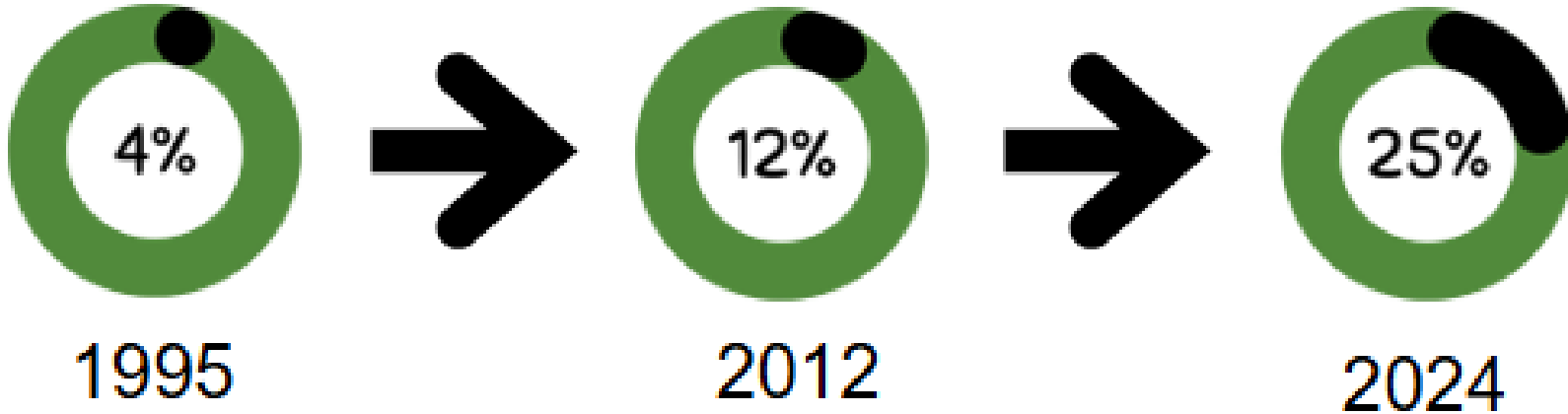
CBD

Found in cannabis. **Not** psychoactive. Does **not** cause feelings of “being high” on its own.

Cannabidiol

Cannabis Has Changed.

THC Content in Cannabis Plant



Cannabis today is more potent than in the past and continues to get more potent

The higher the THC content, the stronger the effects on a person's brain and behavior.

Vaporized and concentrated cannabis wax can have a lot more THC, (ranges from **60% to > 90%** THC concentrate).

Ways Cannabis is Used



Smoking
Joint or Pipe



Edibles
Food
and Drinks



**Vaping /
Concentrates**



Topicals
Lotions, Salves,
Spray

Cannabis Use: Physical Health Effects



**Accidents, injuries,
and, obesity.**



**25% higher odds of heart attack
42% higher odds of stroke**



**Smoking cannabis is linked to
respiratory problems: chronic
bronchitis episodes, asthma,
chronic cough, and COPD**

Cannabis Prevention Policy



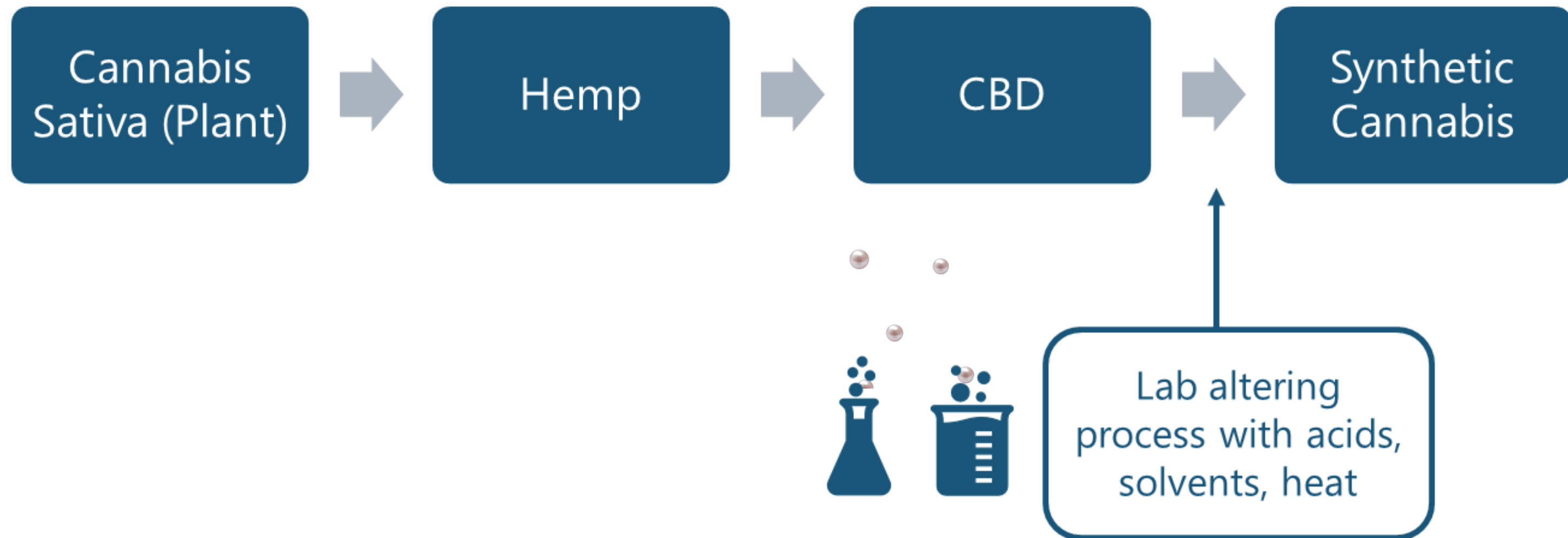
- Regulate and tax cannabis delivery
- Tax cannabis products based on THC content instead of by sales or weight
- Strengthen regulations for products, packaging, marketing, and advertising characteristics that appeal to children and youth
- Fund and implement public education campaigns on the public health risks of cannabis especially for youth



A laboratory setting featuring a robotic arm on the right and a glass bottle of yellow liquid on the left. The bottle has a green cannabis leaf logo on it. A light blue rounded rectangle is overlaid in the center, containing the text 'Synthetic Cannabidiol'.

Synthetic Cannabidiol

What is Synthetic Cannabis?



OTHER NAMES:

- Delta 8
- Intoxicating Hemp
- Hemp-derived products
- Artificially-derived cannabinoids
- Synthetic cannabinoids
- Industrial-hemp products

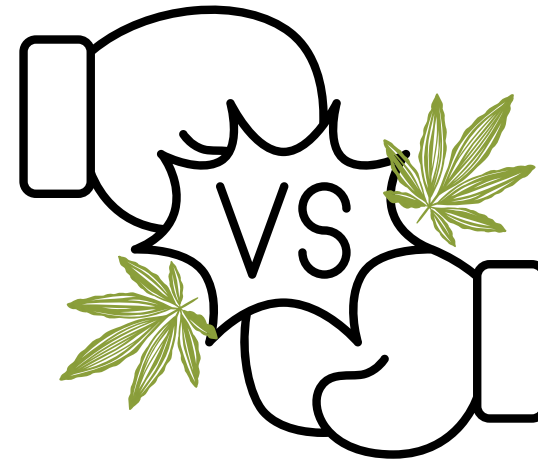
Regular Cannabis

Active ingredient is Delta 9 THC

Found naturally in the plant

Tested and results shared per DCC standards.

Must be 21 years old to purchase.



Synthetic Cannabis

Contains 1 or more synthetically derived cannabinoids.

**Delta-8 = 50-75%
of the level of impairment**

**THC-P = 30x stronger than
regulated cannabis**

Not found naturally in the plant in significant quantities

Not tested or **approved** for safe use by FDA.

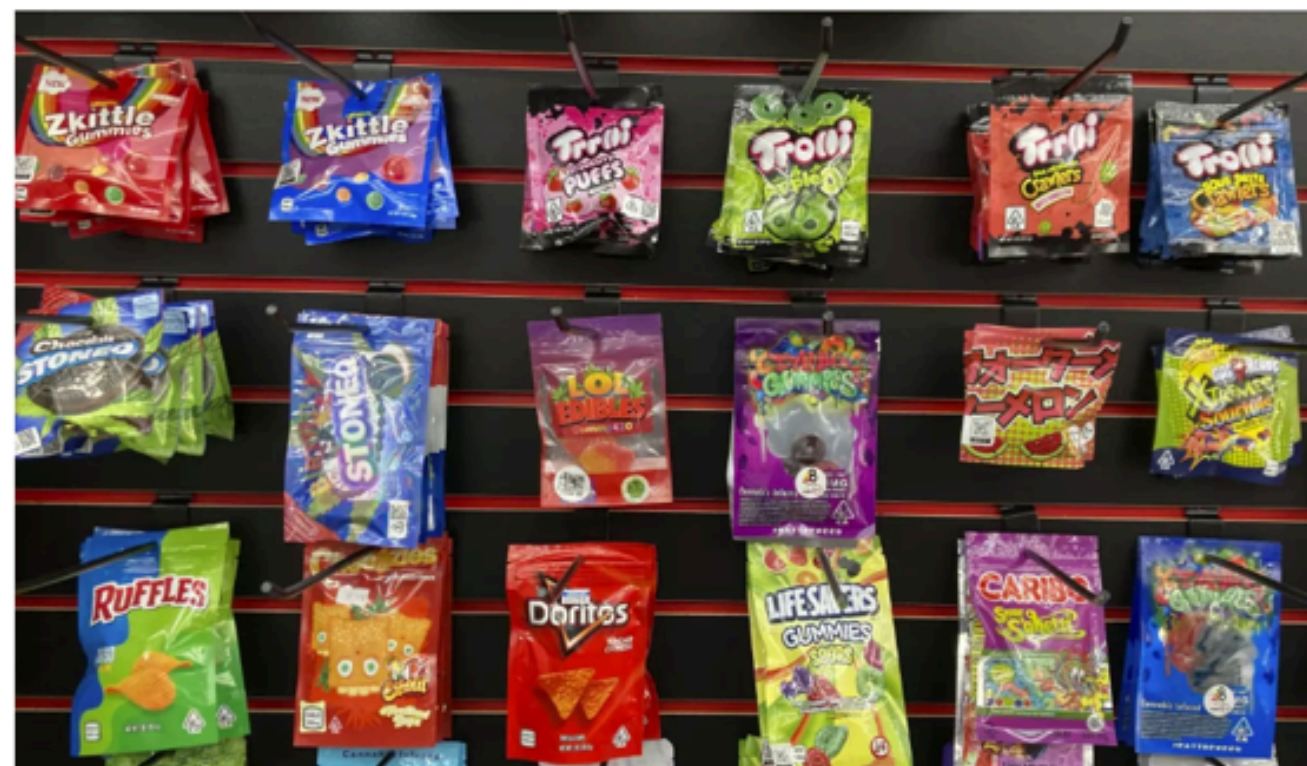
Legal uncertainty (i.e., unclear age restrictions)

Public Health Community Concerns

Los Angeles Times

SCIENCE & MEDICINE

11% of high school seniors report using delta-8 T.
'legal' form of cannabis



01 Access to youth

02 Poisoning risks

03 Lack of lab testing

04 Undermines regulated market

Current Legal Status

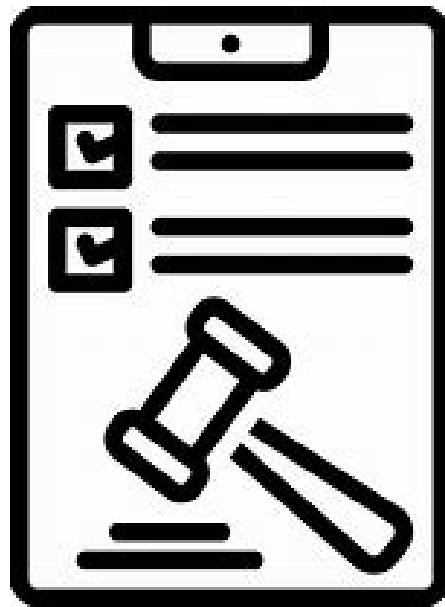
Federal regulations: The 2018 farm bill legalized hemp with less than 0.3% delta-9 THC. Starting in November 2026, this will be expanded to include all types of psychoactive THC. However, there are already legislative efforts for further delay.

State regulations: Multiple attempts to regulate synthetic cannabis have had mixed success. The latest, AB 8, came into effect last month. Sponsored by the cannabis industry, it attempts to move synthetic cannabis to the legal cannabis market by restricting sales to legal dispensaries. But enforcement is limited and uneven, and legal challenges are uncertain.

Local regulations: Only a few localities, like Sacramento County, have specific ordinances regulating synthetic cannabis



Synthetic Cannabis Prevention Policy



Local Enforcement

Local government agencies can require documentation of hemp products (Mountain View)



Conditional Use Permit

Creates conditions requiring when, where, and how these businesses could operate, to minimize their impact to the surrounding community (San Jose)



Tobacco Retail License

Retail licenses could allow businesses to sell certain products and regulate the sale of synthetic cannabis (Campbell?)



Ordinance

Comprehensive legislation regulating the sale of synthetic cannabis products (Sacramento County)



Alcohol

Alcohol

Alcohol consumption is a serious public health problem. In Santa Clara County, alcohol contributes to more than 8,500 emergency department visits and 200 deaths every year.

Alcohol is the most commonly used substance by youth in Santa Clara County.

Nationally, underage drinking leads to **190,000 emergency department visits and 4,300 deaths**

According to data from the CDC, 178,000 people died because of excessive alcohol usage in 2021.



Every year in the United States, more people die of alcohol-related causes than from drug overdoses

Alcohol Prevention Policy

- Prohibit new alcohol retailers from opening if they are within 1500 feet of a school.
 - Existing retailers cannot change character (e.g., expand floor plan or hours)
 - Exempt stores with gross receipts from alcohol under 20%.
- Research, monitor, and consider regulations for alcohol entertainment zones.



Tobacco & Substance Use Prevention Program



Tobacco-Free Communities Program

Mission is to improve the health of all residents and the workforce in Santa Clara County by reducing illness and premature death attributed to the use of tobacco products.

- Prevent initiation of tobacco use & reduce youth access to tobacco products
- Reduce tobacco use, particularly among populations with the highest rates
- Reduce exposure to secondhand smoke and third-hand smoke
- Build community capacity to address tobacco-related issues

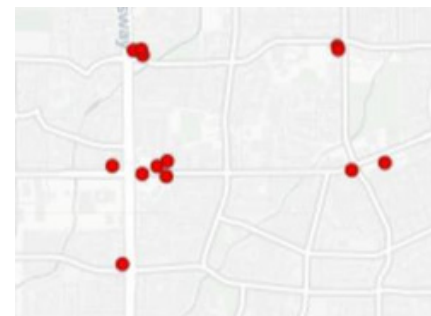


Policy & Advocacy Priorities

Goal: Improve the health of all residents and the workforce in Santa Clara County by reducing illness and premature death attributed to the use of tobacco products.



Prohibit smoking in outdoor public areas and multi-unit housing



Reduce the over concentration of tobacco retailers in communities



Restrict sales of all flavored tobacco and vaping products

END COMMERCIAL TOBACCO SALES
A California Model Ordinance

End the sale of all commercial tobacco products

KICK/IT
California

Enhance and promote quit support systems and services

Smoking in Multi-Unit Housing

- Gilroy (2023) and Morgan Hill (2024) adopted ordinances prohibiting smoking in and at multi-unit residential properties.

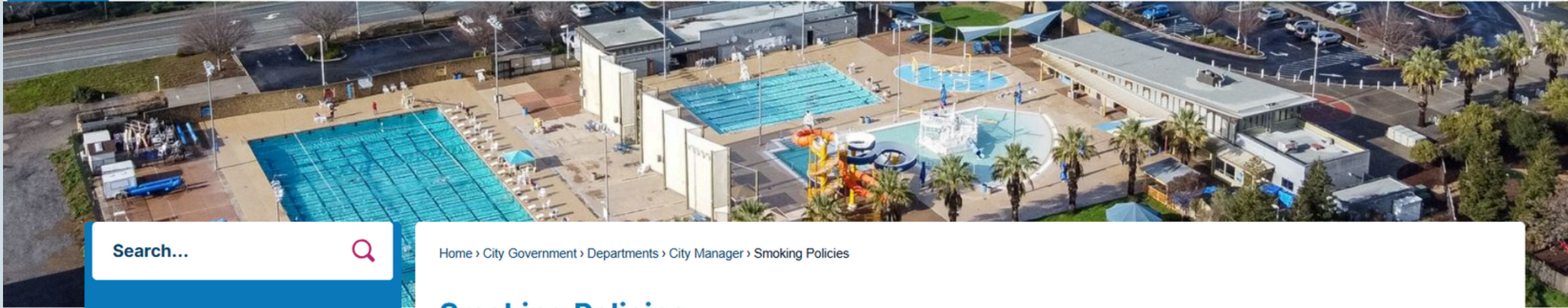
Websites with more info:

<https://www.morganhill.ca.gov/2614/Smoking-Policies>

<https://www.cityofgilroy.org/992/Smoking-Ordinance>

- Both sites offer guidance and resources, including:
 - Informational Flyers
 - Designated Smoking Area Requirements
 - “No Smoking” Signage Templates





Search...



City Manager's Bio

Sustainable Morgan Hill

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Communication & Engagement

Home > City Government > Departments > City Manager > Smoking Policies

Smoking Policies

Smoking & Public Health

Although there has been progress over the last few years, deaths continues to be an urgent public health issue.

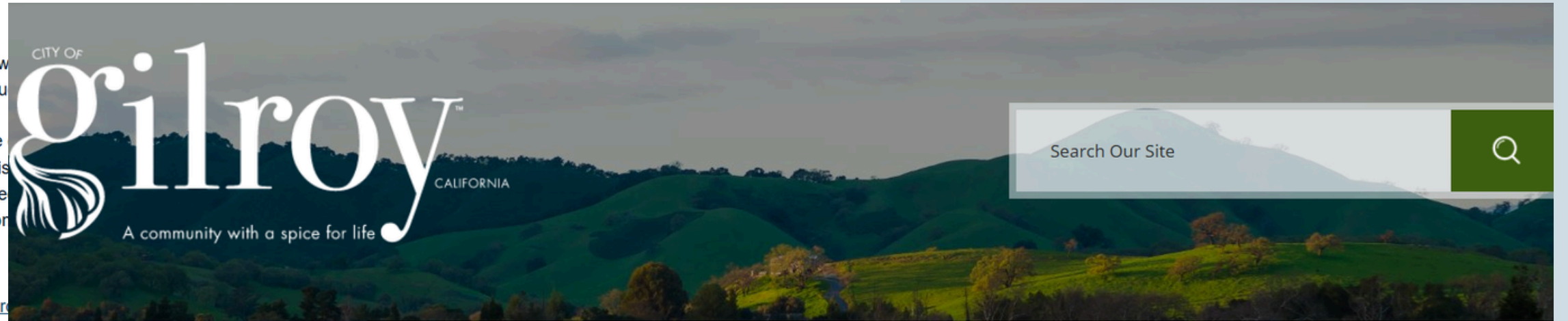
Tobacco use remains the number one preventable cause of death in Santa Clara County, one in eight deaths annually is attributed to tobacco-related diseases. The U.S. Surgeon General has concluded that tobacco use has classified secondhand smoke as a toxic air contaminant.

Morgan Hill Smoking Policies

On September 18, 2024, City Council approved Ordinance 2024-01. The following policies went into effect regarding smoking:

Select Language

Google Translate



CITY OF **gilroy** CALIFORNIA
A community with a spice for life

Search Our Site

Code Enforcement
Complaints

Smoking Ordinance

Sidewalk Vending Ordinance

Mobile Vending Ordinance

Home > City Hall > Community Development > Code Enforcement > Smoking Ordinance

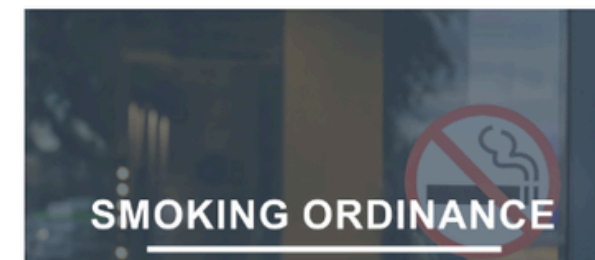
Smoking Ordinance

Ordinance Regarding Smoking and Multi-Unit Residences and Buildings with Landlord/Business Responsibilities

On February 27, 2023, the Gilroy City Council adopted a new ordinance that prohibits smoking in and at residential properties containing two or more attached units.

This ordinance also places certain responsibilities on landlords and owners of such properties. The requirements of this ordinance went into effect on April 1, 2023.

Forms/Links



Contact Us

Code Enforcement Offices

Monday - Thursday
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Friday by appointment only

7351 Rosanna St.
Gilroy, CA 95020

Ph: 408-846-0454

[Email Code Enforcement](#)

[Staff Directory](#)

What's Happening in Gilroy?

Gilroy smoke shops cited for selling magic mushrooms

Police and state officials conducted investigation, search

BY STAFF REPORT - April 28, 2025 1711



NBC BAY AREA

LOCAL

WEATHER

WE INVESTIGATE

VIDEO

SPORTS

NEWSLETTERS

byward explosion

Firefighter gear

Next Gen 911

Fairfield Budweiser plant

Lottery win

Nourishing Neighbors

GILROY

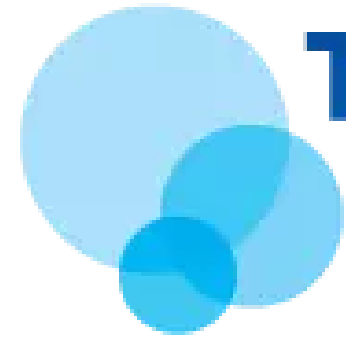
Gilroy temporarily prohibits issuance of new tobacco permits

By Victoria Meza • Published November 12, 2025 • Updated on November 12, 2025 at 9:16 pm

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- April 2025: State and local law enforcement visit and cite local smoke shops for selling flavored tobacco, hallucinogens, and other harmful products
- August 2025: The City Council directs staff to explore policies to regulate smoke shops and other tobacco retailers
- November 2025: The City Council votes in favor of a temporary moratorium on new smoke shops and other tobacco retailers in downtown, which is later expanded citywide
- April 2026: City staff are expected to return with recommendations to regulate smoke shops and other tobacco retailers



TOBACCO-FREE COALITION

of Santa Clara County

Mission

The mission of the Tobacco-Free Coalition of Santa Clara County is to improve the health of Santa Clara County residents through tobacco prevention strategies and community involvement.

Goals

- Reduce the use of tobacco products
- Reduce exposure to secondhand and third-hand smoke
- Advocate for tobacco control policies
- Foster collaboration between coalition members and community groups
- Include vulnerable populations in the coalition and programs
- Educate the community on current tobacco-related issues and best practices



Community Advocate Teens of Today (CATT)



What is CATT?

- CATT is a youth coalition that promotes tobacco-free communities through education and advocacy.
- 15+ members from all over Santa Clara County

What are some activities?

- Attend and speak during City Council Meetings to provide public comment.
- Host a table to educate peers and the community for various community events and at school
- Host park clean-ups to collect tobacco waste in parks.
- Develop projects like podcast episodes, social media posts, artwork, etc.

Youth Orgs United (Y.O.U)



- Members from over a dozen organizations dedicated to **reducing underage substance use**
- Monthly meetings with speakers, workshops, trainings, and info sharing
- **Contact us if you are interested in joining or want to learn more.**

Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR)



- Empowers young people to explore issues impacting their communities and take action to make positive changes.
- Look at issues related to youth cannabis use and advocate for change in Santa Clara County.
- Training and support from **Youth Leadership Institute** and **Public Health Institute**.

YPAR PARTNERS



Secondhand Smoke Letters



- Many residents are concerned about the health hazards caused by secondhand smoke, including from cannabis products
- The Public Health Department can provide letters outlining the local rules and regulations for exposure to secondhand smoke in local jurisdictions
- These letters can be sent to landlords and property owners upon request

Healthy Cities Program

- Healthy Cities launched in 2016
 - Policies were initially largely focused on upstream chronic disease prevention
 - Primary objectives were to promote adoption and implementation of evidence-based policies and practices to support public health (at the city and County level)
- In 2019, we engaged with city and non-profit partners to assess the priorities of cities and opportunities to better support city partners.
- Based on city and partner feedback, the updated dashboard was launched in 2022 online using PowerBI.
- Policy focuses include Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, Racial Equity, Violence Prevention, Youth Access to Tobacco, and Secondhand Smoke Exposure
 - Substance Use is in the process of being added!



Dashboard Update

www.sccphd.org/healthycities



HEALTHY CITIES: MEDALS

Go to: Policies

Area

Legend: ● = Gold Medal ● = Silver Medal ● = Bronze Medal NA = Not Applicable

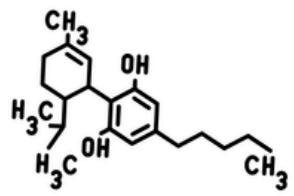
Policy	County of Santa Clara	Campbell	Cupertino	Gilroy	Los Altos	Los Altos Hills	Los Gatos	Milpitas	Monte Sereno	Morgan Hill	Mountain View	Palo Alto	San Jose	Santa Clara	Saratoga	Sunnyvale
Safe places for people of all ages and abilities	●	●	●	●		●	●	●		●	●	●	●			●
Climate change adaptation								●								
Climate change mitigation	●	●	●	●	●		●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Food access	●							●	●	●					●	
Reduced exposure to secondhand smoke	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●
Eliminating youth access to tobacco	●	●	●	●	●	NA	●		NA	●		●	●		●	
Violence prevention and response	●				●	●			●	●	●	●	●		●	●
Advancing racial equity in government	●										●	●	●			
Housing and built environment	●		●	●			●	●		●	●	●	●	●		●

Cannabis 101

(Also known as marijuana, weed, or pot)⁵



California voters approved proposition 64 in 2016. This legalized recreational cannabis use for adults 21 and older within the state.⁵



What is cannabis?²

Cannabis refers to the dried flowers, leaves, stems, and seeds of cannabis plants.

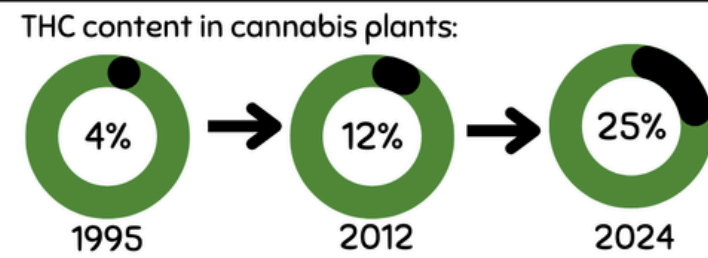
Cannabis plants contain tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) that gives cannabis users a feeling of "being high."

Common Ways Cannabis is Used⁵

- **Vaping/ Concentrates:** turned into strong oils and waxes
- **Edibles:** instilled into food or beverages
- **Topicals:** put into lotions, salves and sprays that are applied to the skin
- **Smoking:** used in a joint or a pipe

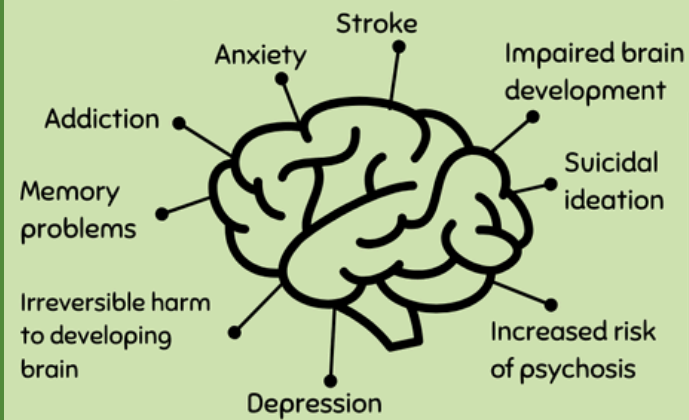
Stronger Cannabis¹

Cannabis today is much stronger than in the past and continues to get stronger.



Health Risks⁷

Cannabis products have been associated with:



Youth Cannabis Use in Santa Clara County

- Over 1 in 11 high school students reported using cannabis products in the last 30 days⁸
- 20% of high school students said they have ever used cannabis⁸
- The primary way youth used cannabis was smoking (43%) or vaping (40%)
- 2 out of 5 youth who vaped cannabis used flavored products

How Do I Talk To My Child About Cannabis?¹⁴

Drugs look different than when you were a kid. It is important to talk your child about the risk of cannabis. Here are some helpful tips to consider:

- Start the conversation**
 Find the right time: A situation such as seeing a cannabis ad might be a good chance to talk.
 - “What are your thoughts on cannabis use?”
- Open-ended questions**
 Ask questions that cannot be answered with a simple yes or no.
 - “Do you believe cannabis is harmful? Why or why not?”
- Avoiding imposing help**
 Do not assume they want your advice. Ask for permission to offer help.
 - “Do you mind if I give you some advice?”
- Building trust**
 Establish that communication is important to trusting them to make their own decisions.
 - “What do you think you’ll do next time when it comes to [topic]?”
- Active and non-judgmental listening**
 Leave space for your teen to express themselves. Listen without interrupting.
 - Icon of two people talking.

For any questions or to learn more:
 sup@phd.sccgov.org
<https://publichealth.sccgov.org/cannabisprevention>



Synthetic Cannabis

The 2018 Farm Bill authorized the production of hemp. This led to the proliferation of synthetic cannabis products.

What is Synthetic Cannabis?

Hemp is a part of the cannabis plant that contains lower levels of THC/cannabinoids. Hemp is being used to create synthetic cannabinoids, which, when smoked, inhaled, or ingested, results in a psychoactive response identical to that of THC.

Different Varieties

There are different varieties of synthetic cannabis that include HHC, THC-P, Delta-10-THC and Delta-8-THC, which is the most common.² In 2023, **more than 11%** of U.S 12th graders used psychoactive delta-8-THC.³

Synthetic Cannabis products found in Santa Clara County



Prerolls



Flower



Gummies



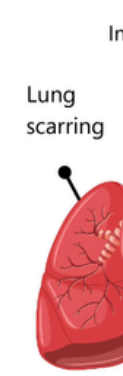
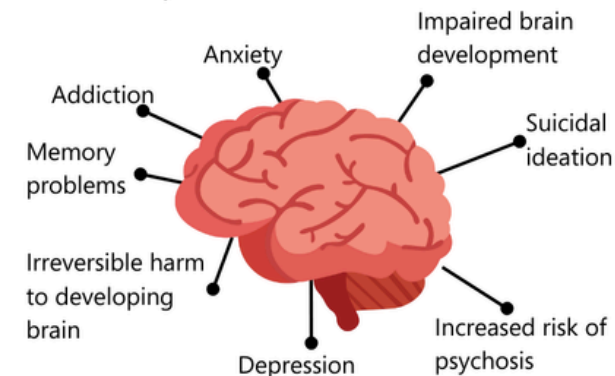
THC drinks



Vapes

Health Risks

Cannabis products have been associated with:⁶



Public Health Concerns

- Products use bright colors, flavors and cartoon like images that attract youth.¹
- Synthetic cannabis is not approved or tested for safe use by the FDA and is not subjected to the same testing and regulation as recreational cannabis.¹
- **Over 80%** of accidental ingestions of Delta-8 involved pediatric patients.¹
- Synthetic cannabis is "Often widely sold without any legal age limit" to youth at smoke shops, liquor stores, gas stations, and other retailers where youth have access.²

Hiding in Plain Sight

- There is increasing concern that some of the synthetic cannabis products sold in stores could be mislabeled. A recent study from Oregon found that³
- All the synthetic cannabis samples they studied had Delta-9-THC exceeding 0.3% legal limit, with most exceeding 15%.
- 89% of online sites did not have adequate age verification and most retailers did not require an ID for purchase.

How Do I Talk To My Child About Synthetic Cannabis?¹⁴

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Fact Sheets

Santa Clara County
PUBLIC HEALTH

Questions?



THANK
YOU

Let's Us Know Your Thoughts!

Scan QR code to complete our feedback survey:

