

## Cannabis Edibles: The Case of Mistaken Identity

by Bridget DeRollo, B.S., CPP-G

The legalization of marijuana has led to increased concerns, from public health to annoyances about the use of the drug in public places. Some reason that Mother Nature has provided it, therefore it can't be that harmful, but science tells a different story. With the increase in its popularity since legalization, food infused with Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), also known as 'edibles,' have entered the landscape.

Smoking marijuana produces a high within minutes through the respiratory system, while edibles take 30 minutes to an hour to take effect and up to three to four hours to reach full strength. Misunderstanding this delay can lead to overconsumption and medical emergencies.

Accidental ingestion is also a risk, as edibles are often packaged like candy or snacks. Children, mistaking them for

sweets, may consume dangerous amounts. Pediatric exposure can cause drowsiness, breathing difficulties, anxiety, hallucinations, or even coma. In cases where edibles are contaminated with substances like fentanyl, the consequences can be far more severe and even fatal.

From 2019 to 2025, poison centers in the United States responded to 39,497 cases of cannabis edible exposure in patients that were 0-19 years of age. The Upstate New York Poison Center has also seen a sharp increase in the number of calls for children and teens who have eaten marijuana edibles. The data is even more concerning when you look at the number of children aged five and under. In 2024, 124 children under age 5 were hospitalized due to edibles and numbers have averaged 152 over the past three years for this age group.

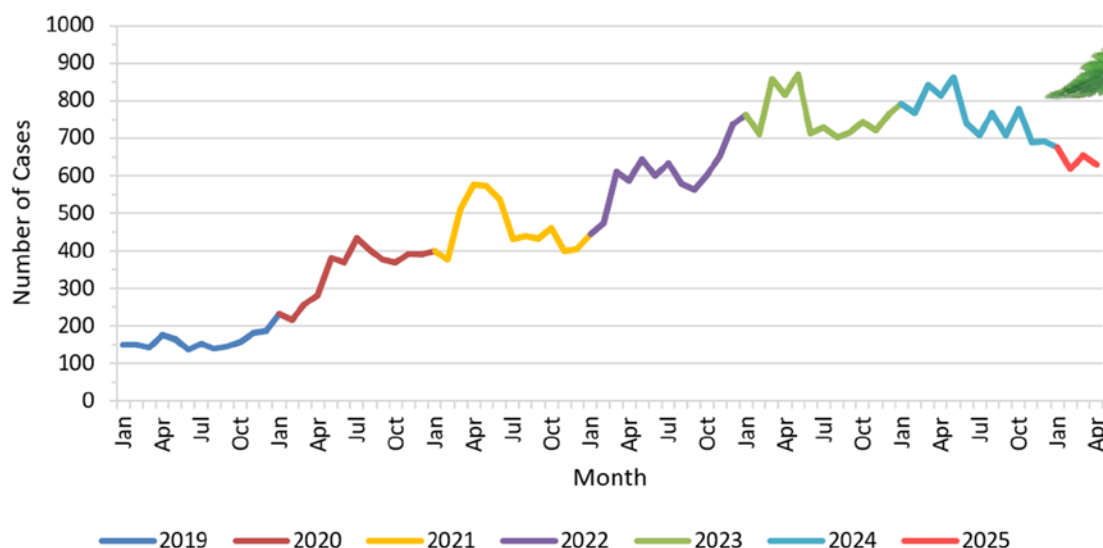
Adults who use edibles should avoid

consuming edibles in front of children and be especially careful to keep them out of reach from children. They should be stored the same as you would store prescription medicines, including:

- Keep them in a locked cabinet or other areas inaccessible to children.
- Store them in a child-proof container or medication lock box.

If you know or suspect a child has had possible exposure from a THC edible, contact Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222 or 911. If you suspect a child has swallowed any form of marijuana, realize symptoms and reactions are often delayed. THC can stay in a child's system much longer than in an adult's. A child's symptoms may differ based on their height and weight, just as medication affects people differently. For more information, contact Bridget DeRollo at [bderollo@depaul.org](mailto:bderollo@depaul.org).

Edible Cannabis Exposures  
Patients 0-19 Years of Age



## Triple P: Getting Teenagers to Cooperate *by Elaine Alvarado*

**P**arenting teenagers comes with its own unique set of challenges. The Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) offers practical strategies to help parents foster cooperation without conflict, power struggles, or constant reminders. The Getting Teenagers to Cooperate module focuses on building mutual respect and clear communication between parents and teens. Instead of relying on punishment or nagging, Triple P encourages parents to use positive reinforcement, clear expectations, and consistent consequences. These tools help teens understand boundaries while feeling respected and heard.

One key strategy is involving teenagers in decision making. When teens feel they have a voice, they're more likely to take ownership of their behavior. Triple P also teaches parents how to stay calm and confident during difficult moments, helping to de-escalate tension and maintain a constructive atmosphere at home. By promoting cooperation through encouragement and structure, Triple P helps families create a more peaceful and supportive environment where teenagers can grow into responsible, independent young adults.

To learn more about Triple P Parent Discussion Groups facilitated in Spanish or English, contact Elaine Alvarado at [elalvarado@depaul.org](mailto:elalvarado@depaul.org).



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### NCADD-RA Services

- Addictions Counselor Credential Training
- Community Education and Advocacy
- Finger Lakes Addiction Resource Center (FLARC)
- Finger Lakes Prevention Resource Center (FL PRC)
- Hispanic Prevention Education Program
- Individualized Alcohol/Other Drug Education
- Resources and Referrals
- Team Awareness Workplace Wellness (TAWW)
- Total Approach Family Program

# Medication Safety at Home

by David Young, A.S.

**T**he accidental ingestion of prescription and over-the-counter medications by children is a serious concern that leads to thousands of emergency room visits and calls to poison control centers each year in the United States. Accidental poisoning is incredibly scary for parents and caregivers. By understanding the challenges and working together to promote safe medication practices, we can create a safer environment for our children and give families peace of mind.

## Understanding the Impact

Each year, an estimated 35,000 children under the age of five visit emergency departments due to accidental medication overdoses, making it one of the leading causes of unintentional deaths among children. This represents about 68.9 percent of all emergency visits for unintentional poisoning in this age group.

## Why Accidental Ingestions Occur

While most cases involve unsupervised children discovering medications themselves, we understand that about five percent can stem from genuine mistakes made by caregivers, such as incorrect dosing. These situations can cause a lot of stress for families who want what's best for their loved ones.

A significant number of accidental ingestions (up to 20 percent) involve children accessing unsecured medications from their grandparents' homes, highlighting the need for all of us in multigenerational households to work together to keep medications safely locked away.

Children are naturally curious and may see colorful pills and medications as intriguing or mistake them for treats. In our busy lives, it's easy for adults to unintentionally place medications in accessible locations rather than in safe and secure child-resistant containers, however not taking the time to secure medications can have unintended and even deadly consequences.

If you have unused medications, it is important to safely dispose of them to avoid them getting into the hands of children or others for whom they were not intended. Consider using a Detera Pouch which immediately deactivates the medication, allowing it to then safely be disposed of in the garbage. Additionally, the DEA National RX Take Back Day is Saturday, October 25th from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. (more information can be found on page 7).

We at NCADD-RA are dedicated to helping families understand the importance of keeping medications safe and out of reach of little ones and vulnerable populations. Your family's safety matters deeply to us. For more information or help obtaining Medication Lock Boxes, Lock Bags, and Detera Pouches, contact David Young at [dayoung@depaul.org](mailto:dayoung@depaul.org).



**If NCADD-RA has touched your life, and has made an impact on you, your family and your community, please consider making a donation.**

Your generous support will help NCADD-RA continue to provide quality education, support, resources and referrals, and advocacy through our many programs and services! There are many ways you can make a difference in the lives of those served by the NCADD-RA.

**To donate, please visit [ncadd-ra.org/donate](https://ncadd-ra.org/donate).**



# Monitoring the Future 2024: Substance Use Trends in Adults

by Delia Gallmeyer, M.S., MHC



**T**he latest findings revealed by the University of Michigan's Monitoring the Future Panel Survey reveal changing substance use behaviors among young and midlife adults. Monitoring the Future has surveyed 20,000 participants annually since 1975, following them from adolescence into adulthood. This long-term perspective allows researchers to track behaviors across decades and assess impacts on health and well-being.

Funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), this study highlights key increases and long-term trends that impact public health priorities.

"Behaviors and public perceptions about drug use can shift rapidly...Tracking these patterns is critical for informing our nation's public health priorities," said

Megan Patrick, PhD, Research Professor and Principal Investigator.

## Nicotine Pouches

The use of nicotine pouches doubled from 2023 to 2024 across multiple age groups (ages 19 to 30, 35 to 50, 55 to 65). This is the first major spike since the use of nicotine pouches began to be tracked in 2023. Nearly one in 10 young adults ages 19 to 30 reported past-year use in 2024.

## Cannabis

The survey found that cannabis use has reached record levels with adults ages 19 to 30 reporting using marijuana over the past year, past month, and daily at near historic highs. Use among adults ages 35 to 50 has doubled over the past decade. Cannabis use disorder increased among 40 to 50 year-olds in the past five years.

## Vaping

Cannabis vaping reached its highest level ever in 2024, with use among young adults having doubled since 2017. Nicotine vaping also hit record highs with past-month use tripling since 2017 among individuals ages 19 to 30 years old.

## Psychedelics & Stimulants

The use of hallucinogens is now at the highest level ever recorded among adults ages 19 to 30 and 35 to 50. Stimulant use, specifically amphetamines and cocaine has risen significantly over the past decade in midlife adults ages 35 to 50.

For more information, visit our website at [ncadd-ra.org](https://ncadd-ra.org). To schedule a presentation, contact Delia Gallmeyer at [dgallmeyer@depaul.org](mailto:dgallmeyer@depaul.org).



# Process Addictions and Workplace Wellness: The Complex Cure

by Kara Cloud, B.A.

**T**here's no denying we are living in a transformative age of the attention economy where workplace demands are in constant flux. Thus, it's more important than ever to look closely at the habits we practice, and how they shape our productivity and well-being. Workplace Wellness reaches far beyond the CDC's traditional drug-free workplace, influencing decision-making, culture, and ultimately a company's success.

Just as workplaces rely on repeated, optimized processes, our minds also run on patterns that shape how we show up at work. When balanced, these routines keep us on track, but when unbalanced, they can become destructive preoccupations also known as process addictions: behaviors that are part of daily living yet are harmful when they spiral out of control.

Examples of process addictions include problem gambling, internet misuse, workaholism, or disordered eating. In the workplace, this may appear as compulsive gossip to relieve stress, working overtime to avoid personal struggles, or other habits that quietly undermine wellness and performance. Over time, these patterns rewire the brain's reward system, making it difficult to see alternatives and make new choices without awareness and support.

We all rely on our routines to start our day, signal when it's time to focus, and progress towards our goals. These same routines, however, can reveal blind spots or moments where unhealthy habits creep in. By addressing them, we improve our sense of connection, become more robust in the face of challenges and accountable towards our purpose, and increase our collective wellbeing.

The Team Awareness Workplace Wellness (TAWW) workshop program helps participants recognize the implicit processes shaping wellness and make small, meaningful changes to transform workplace culture. Since 2022, more than 4,300 New Yorkers have taken part in this evidence-based prevention program, helping workplaces across industries become more resilient.

If you are interested in the benefits this program may offer your organization, NCADD-RA can help. For more information about TAWW, contact Kara Cloud at [kcloud@depaul.org](mailto:kcloud@depaul.org).

# The Health Risks of Alcohol and Marijuana Use During Pregnancy

by Jennifer Faringer, MS. ED., CPP-G

**F**etal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) awareness month in September (not only then but throughout the year) is an opportunity to raise awareness of the negative impact alcohol use has on an unborn child during pregnancy.

## What do we know about alcohol's impact on the unborn child?

We know alcohol use during pregnancy is the leading cause of preventable cognitive and developmental delays in the developing fetus. It is important to recognize that all alcoholic beverages are harmful, that binge drinking is especially harmful, and that there is NO safe level of drinking during pregnancy. As reported by the Institute of Medicine to Congress back in 1996, "of all the substances of abuse, alcohol produces by far the most serious neurobehavioral effects in the fetus."

## What is the impact?

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder impacts one in 20 babies in the United States which is over two times more than autism. In New York State, an estimated 11,000 babies would fall within the spectrum of FASD. This number exceeds the current diagnostic capacity in the State. It is estimated that 90 percent of children with FASD will develop co-morbid mental health conditions. Without early diagnosis and support, students with FASD experience a higher-than-average school failure rate. Raising a child with FASD costs 30 times more than preventing it, with collective expenses—health care, special education, residential care, lost productivity, and corrections—totaling an estimated \$12 billion annually.

## What are protective factors?

There is no acceptable safe level of drinking during pregnancy. Early identification is important to ensure that needed intervention services and supports are put into place to prevent the development of any secondary disabilities. The Rochester area is fortunate to have one of the few statewide diagnostic clinics in the region at the University of Rochester FASD Diagnostic and Evaluation Clinic.

## What about the impact of marijuana use during pregnancy?

In addition to alcohol, new research is coming out frequently regarding the health risks around the use of marijuana which includes the risks of marijuana use during pregnancy. With the legalization of adult recreational use, the prevalence of use among pregnant women has increased. Between 2002 and 2020, reported use rose significantly with use in first trimester up from 6.3 percent to 16 percent; use in second trimester up from 1.9 percent to 4.2 percent, and use in third trimester up from 2 percent to 4.7 percent.

Outcomes of marijuana use on the unborn child include neurological deficits, neurobehavioral effects, and lower birth weight, which is similar to the potential impacts of alcohol use during pregnancy.

A study from the University of Maryland found that prenatal exposure to Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), an active cannabinoid that produces the high, increases the sensitivity to THC in pre-adolescent years. This in turn increases the vulnerability of the child to develop an addiction in adolescence and can also increase the anxiety levels and rates of depression.

Ensure the healthiest outcome for your baby, and refrain from the use of alcohol, marijuana, tobacco, and other harmful drugs during pregnancy. To learn more about FASD or the risks of marijuana use during pregnancy, visit our website at [ncadd-ra.org](http://ncadd-ra.org), or to schedule a presentation contact Jennifer Faringer at [jfaringer@depaul.org](mailto:jfaringer@depaul.org).





# Building Healthier College Communities: Why Prevention Matters

by Juliana Denning, B.S.



**C**olleges are more than places to study—they are vibrant, diverse communities nestled within larger towns and cities. Students bring their individuality, energy, curiosity, and eagerness to dive into everything college life has to offer. Along with academics, they explore new social groups, activities, and experiences.

With the excitement comes a shift in social norms and perceptions, especially around substance use, which is why it's so important for colleges and their surrounding communities to work together to support prevention efforts. Proven to save money and improve public health, prevention efforts help students make healthy choices, keep campuses safer, and allow communities to thrive.

## What the Data Tells Us

According to the 2024 Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey, 26.1 percent of college students reported using cannabis in the past 30 days—a four percent increase from the previous year.

Cannabis vaping, in particular, is on the rise. 14.2 percent of college students reported vaping cannabis compared to 19.6 percent of their non-college peers

These numbers are up from the previous year, showing a clear trend that we can't ignore.

In terms of high intensity alcohol consumption, 27.7 percent of college students reported having five or more

drinks in a row which was down from the previous year's 30.4 percent and this trend continued to decline in the following year according to the MTF survey.

## The Risk Factors are Real

College life introduces risk factors that can increase the chances of underage substance use including:

- Easier access to substances
- Less parental oversight
- High stress, especially during the first year
- Misconceptions that substance use is common
- Social normalization on campus
- A low perception of harm
- Existing substance use habits

## How Colleges Can Take the Lead in Prevention

The good news is campuses can proactively reduce risk factors and build a culture of health by creating a campus-community coalition in addition to offering other effective supports and strategies including:

- Hosting health fairs and educational programs around the risks of using substances
- Promoting social norms campaigns that dispel misperceptions
- Providing service and volunteer opportunities
- Partnering on community events
- Offering faith-based engagement

- Sharing swag and educational materials
- Organizing “party host” training sessions

## Timing Matters

When it comes to prevention messaging, timing is everything. Key moments throughout the academic year that are great opportunities to engage students include:

- The first six weeks of the semester (a critical adjustment period)
- September – National Recovery Month
- Halloween and St. Patrick's Day
- Spring Break
- April – Alcohol Awareness Month
- April 20 – Cannabis Culture Day
- End-of-term and graduation celebrations

Incorporating prevention strategies into these moments helps make the healthy choice the easy choice.

## Want to Get Involved?

Together, we can create a culture where students can thrive safely. If you live in a college town or work on a campus and want to learn how to get involved in prevention efforts in your area, contact Juliana Denning at [jdenning@depaul.org](mailto:jdenning@depaul.org). To learn more about how the Finger Lakes Prevention Resource Center can make a difference in your community, visit [ncadd-ra.org/services/finger-lakes-prevention-resource-center](http://ncadd-ra.org/services/finger-lakes-prevention-resource-center).

# Prevention Coalitions in Monroe County Tackle Medication Take Back

by Irene Lawrence, B.S.W., CPP

**S**ubstance Use Prevention Coalitions are joining forces to make the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) Medication Take Back events more sustainable and effective heading into 2026. Their shared goal is to streamline local efforts by offering consistent, accessible collection sites, strengthening community partnerships, and raising awareness of prevention resources. By working together, the coalitions hope to reduce the number of unused, expired, and potentially harmful prescriptions in our communities.

This collaboration brings together the Webster Health Education Network (WHEN), the Rush and Henrietta Health and Safety Coalition, the Irondequoit Uplift Coalition, and the Youth ARMS Coalition. Additional partners include the Monroe County Library System, the Rochester Library System, NCADD-RA's Finger Lakes Prevention Resource Center, the National Guard, and the Monroe County Sheriff's Office.

Looking ahead, the group is also exploring ways to expand Take Back events to include vape products and sharps. While these items are not currently accepted due to disposal challenges and safety concerns, Monroe County's EcoPark does provide a drop-off option for vapes.

The Coalitions are now preparing for the next DEA Take Back Day to be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, October 25. They are hopeful the event will surpass the record set last spring, when 837 pounds of medications were collected—the highest amount to date.



## Life on the Coalition Highway

by Jerry Bennett, B.A., CPP

**O**ver the past three years in the last five NCADD-RA newsletters, our Coalition 'bus tour' has highlighted the many prevention coalitions supported by the Finger Lakes Prevention Resource Center (PRC) across the 12-county Finger Lakes region. Now we're cruising closer to the NCADD-RA's home in Gates—spotlighting Hilton-Parma and Rush-Henrietta.

Just up the road we pick up Route 259 into Hilton, home of the famous fall Apple Fest. Hilton village incorporated in 1885 bears the motto 'the little village with the big heart.' Juliana Denning has been supporting the group as they build a strong volunteer base, shaping its vision and mission, and expanding partnerships across the community. Already, they've supported smoke-free and vape-free policy updates and are connecting with local organizations to promote family-friendly, pro-social opportunities. The coalition meets at the Village Community Center on Henry Street. To learn more, contact Juliana through the PRC at [jdenning@depaul.org](mailto:jdenning@depaul.org).

As we head to southern Monroe County, we find signs welcoming us to Henrietta and Rush. Passing through the Jefferson Road retail corridor, one finds the Rochester Institute of Technology, the Rush-Henrietta School District, farmlands, Tinker Nature Center,

and the very busy CHS Mobile EMS base, which is where the Rush and Henrietta Community Health and Safety Coalition meet monthly. The Coalition traces its roots back to the 1980s as an advisory committee to the school district. With nonprofit status achieved in late 2024, the coalition continues to thrive under the leadership of longtime members Barb Christensen and Rick Page. The Coalitions achievements include co-sponsoring community forums, hosting parent workshops, supporting Red Ribbon Week activities, collaborating on Narcan trainings, and promoting DEA Take Back Days. To connect, reach out to Jerry Bennett at [jbennett@depaul.org](mailto:jbennett@depaul.org).

Both coalitions welcome new members and support. Whether through time, talent, or resources, your involvement helps strengthen prevention efforts across Monroe County. Well, that's all for now. The PRC Coalition tour bus will see you next spring - somewhere in the Finger Lakes.



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## Educational Opportunities!

NCADD-RA provides community presentations on a wide variety of substance misuse related topics upon request for your school/university faculty, including classroom presentations, outreach and clinical staff, faith groups, or workplace organizations. Topics include (but are not limited to) the following:

- **Signs, Symptoms, Current Trends and Community Resources**
- **Community Health Risks of Marijuana Use and Misuse**
- **Underage and Binge Drinking**
- **Overview of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders**
- **Impact of Addiction on the Family**

For further information or to schedule a presentation with one of our staff, please contact Jennifer Faringer at [jfaringer@depaul.org](mailto:jfaringer@depaul.org) or Delia Gallmeyer at [dgallmeyer@depaul.org](mailto:dgallmeyer@depaul.org).



### **Announcing NCADD-RA's next Addiction Counselor Credential Training (ACCT) program!**

The class of 2026-2027 begins January 13, 2026. To apply to the upcoming ACCT program, scan the QR code or visit [ncadd-ra.org](http://ncadd-ra.org) and the ACCT page to download a Student Application, an informational brochure, and class schedule. (Scholarships may be available.) For more information contact Jennifer Faringer at [jfaringer@depaul.org](mailto:jfaringer@depaul.org) or Delia Gallmeyer at [dgallmeyer@depaul.org](mailto:dgallmeyer@depaul.org).

