

Delta-8 THC: what is it and what should you know about it?

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In recent months, we have been asked about Delta-8 THC by patients, pharmacists, and friends who have noticed that it is the current newsmaker of the cannabis world on social media. It is being touted as a “next generation” THC that won’t get you high, and many are claiming that it won’t cause a positive drug test. It is showing up in food, gummies, tinctures, and vape products often marketed as “hemp” products because hemp already has a reputation of being safer than “marijuana.”

Don’t be fooled. Delta-8 THC is not as intoxicating as Delta-9 THC, and it is naturally found in much smaller quantities and concentrations. But it

will make a user high and can show up on drug tests. Manufacturers have found ways to isolate Delta-8 THC and create products with very high concentrations that have in no way been evaluated, let alone approved by the Food and Drug Administration for safety. You may be thinking, “What does this have to do with CBD?” Interestingly, Delta-8 THC is made from CBD through a process called cannabinoid conversion. What we are seeing is less-than-ethical manufacturers marketing Delta-8 THC as a compound as safe as CBD and, combined with CBD, selling it in dosage forms that are becoming more accepted as CBD becomes more prevalent.

Delta-8 THC is made by dissolving CBD in solvents such as toluene or heptane. After converting the CBD to Delta-8 THC, it is extracted using ether. With such potent solvents in play, it is critical that the lab has strict procedures and safety controls in place to remove the harmful byproducts and other contaminants from the final product. However, the complicated process to effectively synthesize Delta-8 THC is virtually non-regulated, and most of the products have bogus or no certificates of analysis. Although many states are hastily creating regulations to control sales of Delta-8 THC, they are playing catch up at this point.

Although the 2018 Farm Bill does not mention Delta-8 THC specifically, it is now on the FDA’s radar because of a large increase in adverse events reported to the National Poison

Control Centers in the first six months of 2021. Even though Delta-8 THC is derived from CBD, the fact that the Drug Enforcement Administration considers it an illegal controlled substance should be of no surprise. There are many instances where, although the starting substances are legal, the resultant products are not necessarily legal, let alone safe. Think of pseudoephedrine being used to make methamphetamine.

All of these concerns are magnified when looking at how Delta-8 THC is marketed, and to whom. Its unique properties, which are similar to THC and CBD, point to therapeutic potential for many of the same conditions and ailments that prompt millions to turn to CBD for relief: pain and inflammation, anxiety, and sleep issues. Now if a customer asks you whether they should consider Delta-8 THC for these conditions, you are prepared to answer them and guide them to a safe and effective CBD product that you are confident recommending.

The NCPA CBD Source, powered by PRS, has all the information you need to know about CBD’s unique qualities. Please call us at 800-338-3688 or visit NCPACBDSource.com to find out more. Any statements regarding CBD products have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration or any other regulating or governing body. CBD products are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease. Results from any CBD products may vary. You are responsible for contacting your state board of pharmacy and any applicable regulating entity to determine the legality of selling or shipping CBD products in your state. ■

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