

## ‘Diet weed’: More than 10% of high school seniors take ‘loophole’ legal drug delta-8 THC. What are the consequences?

More than 11% of high school seniors report using [delta-8 THC](#) — a compound closely related to the psychoactive chemical in marijuana that’s legal in many states [thanks to a loophole in the 2018 farm bill](#) — according to a study published [March 12] in the [Journal of the American Medical Association](#).

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“We know high school students naturally want to explore and try new ‘exciting’ things, like [e-cigarettes](#), alcohol or marijuana,” said senior study author Adam Leventhal, director of the University of Southern California Institute for Addiction Science. “It’s not surprising that we’re seeing that they’re using delta-8. We just didn’t expect it to be so high.”

Delta-8 tetrahydrocannabinol is only slightly chemically different from delta-9 THC, which is the type of THC that is typically found in marijuana and what people most likely think of as responsible for the drug’s high.

Delta-8 is sometimes referred to as “diet weed” or “weed-lite,” because it’s believed to have weaker psychoactive effects than delta-9. The problem, Leventhal said, is that there isn’t enough research to say that definitively.

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Delta-8 isn’t the only cannabinoid that has entered the market that has experts concerned, [Director of the UCLA Center for Cannabis and Cannabinoids Ziva] Cooper said.

“We don’t know very much about them, but people are using them, and they’re proliferating,” she said, referring to other synthetic cannabinoids.

[\*\*This is an excerpt. Read the full article here\*\*](#)