



# CANNABIS

How to Safely Store Your  
Cannabis to Protect Your  
Child and Pets

# INTRODUCTION

As parents and caregivers, we want to do everything we can to protect our children and pets, and we understand the concerns surrounding cannabis exposure. In this guide, we outline the risks associated with youth and pets accessing cannabis, explain why it may attract their curiosity, and provide practical steps to safely store cannabis in your home.

You are your child's and pet's most important protector and advocate. Whether cannabis is used medicinally or recreationally in your household, we're here to support you in keeping it safely secured and out of reach, ensuring the health and well-being of everyone at home.

# KNOW BEFORE YOU STOW

Medical and adult-use marijuana possession and consumption is legal in Montana. Safely storing your marijuana products is imperative; these products can have serious health consequences for children and pets.

Most accidental marijuana exposures (98 percent) occurred in residential settings. The number of exposures, as well as hospital admissions, rose during the pandemic years, possibly due to children spending more time at home with more opportunity to access their parents' edibles.

## **Some factors to consider to safely and securely storing personal marijuana products include:**

- Does the product have any indications that it contains marijuana?
- Marijuana and marijuana products should be kept in their original labeling and packaging.
- Finding a secure place to effectively store marijuana & marijuana products.
- Keeping a list of the marijuana and marijuana products that are currently in the home.
- Recognizing the signs of an accidental ingestion or overconsumption of marijuana and marijuana products.
- Would YOU know what to do in the event of an accidental ingestion or overconsumption of marijuana?

# WHY IS SAFE STORAGE IMPORTANT?

Proper storage of medical cannabis is important, as improper storage can lead to product breakdown. As cannabis ages, the chemicals of the plant can change into different chemical compounds, meaning medical cannabis will not work as well as it once did. Improper storage can also increase the risk of mold, bacterial, and fungal growth on cannabis, which can cause several health issues. Properly storing your cannabis ensures the quality and safety of the product.

Cannabis, like other medications, should be stored in a secure place in your private residence, away from children and pets. It should be stored in a child-resistant container when not in use. Keep track of the amount of cannabis in your home to ensure no one else is using your cannabis.

If you have children, consider having age-appropriate conversations with them about the purpose of medical cannabis in the home. Make it clear that medical cannabis is for medical purposes only and, just like other medications, it should be used only by the person who obtained it using their written certification.

# MEDICAL CANNABIS SAFE STORAGE

## Storing Medical Cannabis Safely

If you use medical cannabis, it's important to store it safely away from children and pets. Just like any other drug, medication, or household chemical, cannabis and edibles must be kept secure and out of reach.

Safe storage helps ensure that only the certified patient or designated caregiver has access. Furthermore, proper storage inhibits mold and bacteria growth that may negatively impact health.

## Keep Your Medical Cannabis Safe in a Lockbox

Kids, pets, or even curious visitors can get into medical cannabis if it's not locked up and out of sight. It's always best to keep cannabis in child-resistant packaging, and invest in a safe or lockbox to ensure the only person who can get to your medical cannabis is you.

If a child accidentally eats cannabis in any form, immediately contact a medical professional or call the poison control hotline (1-800-222-1222). Symptoms of an accidental cannabis poisoning include problems walking or sitting up, difficulty breathing, and becoming sleepy. If the reaction seems more severe, call 911 or go to an emergency room right away.

## Talking to Your Kids About Medical Cannabis in the Home

When talking with your children about medications or other potentially harmful products, include medical cannabis in the conversation. Children should learn what medical cannabis looks like and know that only certified patients, or their designated caregiver(s), should access it.

## CANNABIS CHECKLIST

### MY MEDICAL CANNABIS IS...

- In child-resistant packaging
- In a clearly labeled medicinal container
- In a locked cabinet or lockbox
- In the trunk while I am driving
- In a cool, dark place
- In a dry place
- In an airtight container
- Out of direct sunlight
- Away from heat sources
- In a glass or plastic container, not a plastic bag

## DISPOSAL

The best disposal option is to mix cannabis with undesirable substances, such as kitty litter, dirt, or used coffee grounds. The goal is to make medical cannabis products unusable. The mixture of cannabis and undesirable substances should go into a sealable container (e.g., resealable zipper storage bag or screw-top container) before being put into the garbage.



### QUICK TIPS



Dark, cool, and dry places are best for most forms of medical cannabis.



The best humidity for storage is between 54% and 63%.



The best temperature for storage is between 55° F and 65° F.



Store cannabis in a locked cabinet or lockbox.



Avoid storing cannabis in places children and pets can reach.



Dispose of cannabis using a sealable container.

## HOW TO STORE CANNABIS FLOWER

High temps, exposure to ultraviolet light and air, and high humidity are cannabisflowers' worst enemies. Keep your flower fresh and potent by storing it in an air-tight glass container that's either blacked out or stored away from direct light. Additionally, keep your stash away from heat sources in your home, like appliances, for example. Always store your jar in a cool, dry place.

## HOW TO STORE CANNABIS OIL & WAX

When it comes to concentrates, silicone containers are your bestie. These storage options make it easy to store oils and cannabis wax. Silicone containers also make it super-easy to get your oils and waxes out, unlike some plastic or glass options. With silicone, your shatter will peel seamlessly off the surface. No mess, no stress.

And while nobody's stopping you from putting flower inside of silicone containers, glass jars do a much better job at containing the unmistakable aroma of cannabis. If discretion is your goal, you may want to opt for another method of storage.

## HOW TO STORE CANNABIS EDIBLES

Brownies, muffins, and candies, oh my! All cannabis edibles are not created equal, although they are all equally delicious. The components and ingredients found in edibles range dramatically, which means storage and shelf-life can vary from product to product.

For most edible candies and gummies, dark, dry, and cool storage is best. Sugar is a natural preservative, so your stash of cannabis candies or gummies will have a pretty lengthy lifespan.

Hard candies are prone to absorbing moisture. An excess of moisture can make them incredibly soft, resulting in one big clump of sticky candies if stored improperly. But, you can avoid a monster clump simply by keeping your sweets in a cool spot, like your pantry. Softer edibles like caramels, should always be individually wrapped before moving into storage.

And other cannabis-infused products like baked goodies, jellied candies, and fudge are prone to losing freshness and moisture fast when exposed to the open air.

The best way to keep 'em all fresh? Always keep your edible items tightly wrapped, doing so will keep your edibles fresh for up to nine months.

## HOW TO STORE CONCENTRATES

We all want to extend the potency and flavor of cannabis concentrates. And, it all starts with proper storage.

Like all cannabis products, cannabis concentrates require a delicate environment. Storage methods will depend on factors such as volume, consistency of the cannabinoid concentrate, and how long you intend to store your concentrates overall.

The most versatile storage option for short-term storage is medical-grade silicone jars. The silicone material ensures that your cannabis concentrates remain uncontaminated.

However, many silicone jars are not air-tight, which is why they are only ideal for short-term use.

For long-term storage, store your cannabis concentrates in a small glass container and slide 'em into the freezer. First, you'll want to vacuum-seal your containers to be totally sure that absolutely no humidity or moisture sneaks into your concentrates.

Vacuum sealing is one of the best ways to keep your cannabis concentrates fresh for extended periods of time.

# YOUTH USE & SAFE STORAGE

You have to be 21 to buy, use, or possess cannabis in New York State.

Parents and mentors: You can impact whether youth in your life use cannabis. Start the conversation with them early and have it often. Make sure they understand the consequences and the negative impact it can have on their growing, developing brain. Pre-teens, teens, and youth in their early 20s tend to seek out new experiences and engage in risky behaviors, like using cannabis.

If you keep cannabis and cannabis products at your home, they should be stored safely, locked up, and out of reach of children and pets. Accidentally consuming edibles is a risk for children and pets that can result in cannabis toxicity or the need for emergency medical attention. If there is an accidental exposure to cannabis or cannabis products of any kind — call Poison Control Center (800) 222-1222 or visit your Emergency Room if needed.

Contact your vet immediately if your pet has ingested a cannabis-containing product.

## Is it OK for kids to consume adult-use cannabis?

No. Adult-use cannabis is illegal for anyone under the age of 21. Cannabis can be harmful to growing brains and have long-term health and social impacts.

## Why is cannabis harmful to kids?

Certain compounds in cannabis (like THC) can affect the developing brain. The part of the brain that is responsible for making decisions (the prefrontal cortex) is one of the last parts of the brain that develops and is particularly impacted by cannabis use. Young people's brains aren't done developing until the age of 25.

## What other developmental issues in youth can be caused by cannabis use?

Negative cognitive effects can include difficulty thinking and solving problems, problems with memory and learning, reduced coordination, difficulty maintaining attention, and problems with school and social life after consistent use.

## Can cannabis have an impact on mental health?

Youth frequently using cannabis can increase the risk of mental health issues, including depression, social anxiety, acute psychosis, and schizophrenia. Cannabis use, especially frequent (daily or near daily) use and use that begins at an early age has been associated with schizophrenia and psychosis. The association appears stronger in people who also have a family history of schizophrenia, and in people who consume cannabis with higher THC content.

# WHAT TO DO IF A CHILD OR PET GETS HOLD OF CANNABIS

Despite our best efforts, accidents can happen. Knowing how to respond quickly and effectively can make a significant difference.

## For Children:

1. **Stay Calm:** Panicking can make the situation worse. Stay calm and assess the situation.
2. **Identify the Substance:** Try to determine how much and what type of cannabis the child has ingested.
3. **Call Poison Control:** Immediately contact the Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222) for advice. They can provide you with specific instructions based on the amount and type of cannabis ingested.
4. **Seek Medical Attention:** If instructed, or if the child shows signs of severe distress (such as difficulty breathing, severe drowsiness, or seizures), take them to the emergency room

## For Pets:

1. **Stay Calm:** Like with children, it's crucial to remain calm to effectively manage the situation.
2. **Identify the Substance:** Determine how much and what type of cannabis the pet has ingested.
3. **Contact a Veterinarian:** Call your vet or an emergency veterinary clinic. They can offer advice based on the pet's weight, age, and the amount ingested.
4. **Monitor Symptoms:** Watch for signs of distress, such as excessive drooling, vomiting, lethargy, or uncoordinated movements. Follow the vet's instructions carefully and seek immediate medical attention if needed.

# RISKS OF INGESTION TO CHILDREN AND PETS

Children and pets are particularly vulnerable to the effects of cannabis ingestion. THC, the psychoactive compound in cannabis, can have profound impacts on their developing bodies and brains. Accidental ingestion may lead to symptoms such as lethargy, impaired coordination, altered mental status, and, in rare cases, respiratory distress or seizures.

## Signs and Symptoms of Cannabis Poisoning in Children:

- Vomiting
- Dizziness
- Difficulty walking
- Rapid heart rate
- Drowsiness
- Confusion
- Breathing difficulties

## Signs and Symptoms of Cannabis Poisoning in Pets:

- Loss of urinary control
- Vomiting
- Lethargy
- Shaking
- Stumbling
- Drooling
- Irregular breathing



If you suspect your child or pet has ingested cannabis or a cannabis-infused product, take immediate action.

**CALL POISON CONTROL 24/7 AT 800-222-1222**

Reach out to your local poison control center or the Pet Poison Helpline (for pets) for guidance specific to your situation. They can provide valuable advice and instructions.

Be prepared to provide details about the type of cannabis product ingested, the quantity consumed (if known), and the individual's age and weight. This information will assist medical professionals in providing appropriate care.

Stay calm. Remaining calm will help you make clear decisions and provide necessary assistance.

Assess the situation. Check for any immediate signs of distress or severe symptoms. If the situation appears critical, call 9-1-1.

## 5 TIPS FOR SECURING YOUR CANNABIS STASH

### 1. Use a Lockable Stash Box

One of the most effective ways to ensure your cannabis products are out of reach is by using a lockable stash box. Look for varieties that are sturdy, child-proof, and can only be opened with a combination you set or a key. This makes it an excellent choice for keeping curious kids and pets away from your stash.

### 2. Store Cannabis Products in High, Out-of-Reach Places

Beyond using a stash box, it's important to store your cannabis in locations that are inaccessible to children and pets. High shelves, top cabinets, or locked closets are ideal spots. Ensure these places are not easily climbable and regularly check that they remain secure and out of reach.

### 3. Educate Family Members

Communication is key when it comes to safety. Make sure all family members understand the importance of keeping cannabis products away from children and pets.

### 4. Keep Products in Their Original Packaging

Whenever possible, keep your cannabis products in their original, child-proof packaging. This packaging is designed to be difficult for children to open and often includes important information about the product. This not only helps in maintaining safety but also in identifying the contents if an accident occurs.

### 5. Regularly Check Your Storage Practices

Set a routine to periodically check your cannabis storage. Ensure that the stash box is always locked, the key is stored safely, and the products are in their original packaging. Regular checks help in maintaining the discipline of safe storage and quickly addressing any lapses.



## TYPES OF STORAGE



### Standard Drawer or Cabinet Lock

Purchase a quick and easy to install Steel Cam Lock at your local hardware store or online. A Cam Lock can be mounted to metal or wood doors and drawer panels using a few simple tools.



### Magnetic Cabinet Lock

These clever Rev-A-Shelf Rev-A-Lock magnetic locks are invisible from the outside of the cabinet. Once installed, the cabinet door can only be opened by placing the powerful magnetic knob-like “key” on the outside face – in just the right spot. Lock assembly can attach to wood, glass, metal, and particleboard cabinets.



### Combination Medicine Lock Box

Safer Lock Box Secure Medicine Box with 4-Digit Combination Lock is certified child resistant with a user friendly, food grade hard plastic design that fits multiple medicine bottles and locks with a 4-digit combination code of your choosing. Safer Lock Boxes can be a portable option or can be securely mounted to a closet or cabinet shelf using a couple nuts and bolts.



### Standard Steel Bank/Cash Box

Use a standard bank or cash box like the Honeywell Cash Management Box for locking up medication. The boxes are made of steel, come in different sizes with a removable slotted tray, and can be a portable option or can be securely mounted to a closet or cabinet shelf using a couple nuts and bolts.



### Money Bag with Lock

A more discreet and easy-to-store option is a money bag. Cannabis can fit in a small locking device typically designed for money or pills.



### Cabinet Wall Lock

You can also secure cabinets this using a locking device hooked to a connecting wall. This gives lots of storage for all your supplies and needs without needing a key.

# TYPES OF STORAGE



## Medication Lock Box

The Secure-A-Meds Personal Medication Lock Box can hold up to 6 different prescription bottles and fits perfectly inside a standard medicine cabinet or can be securely mounted to a shelf by using the included mounting hardware.



## Safe Box

Keypad locking safes are a secure and easy way to keep your medicine safe and loved one free from harm. For example, the Tenamic Safe Box is a cost effective option with pre-drilled holes for easy mounting.



## Child-Safe Mason Jar

This product with a child-proof lid is another option to store easily on higher shelves in the kitchen or closet. A better option is to paint the jar so kids can't see through it to what's inside, but it is a great option for convenient storage that isn't hard or inconvenient for adults to open.



## Rectangular Money Box

Store products and supplies in a box originally designed for money but fits lots of paraphernalia that may not fit in a smaller medicine box.



## Large Fridge Storage

This box can fit in your fridge and secure all your valuables in a convenient location.