

## **Delta-8 – What’s That?**

Delta-8 is a new variant of marijuana derived from Delta-9, which is the most common form of THC. Delta-9 is the compound found in marijuana that causes psychoactive symptoms, such as hallucinations, disconnected thoughts, panic responses, changes in perception, and delusions, among other psychological side effects. While Delta-8 is a form of THC, it provides what people describe as a “mild high.” Many people refer to Delta-8 as “marijuana lite” or “diet weed,” due to the high it gives being so much milder than that of Delta-9. It is believed that it can cause similar psychoactive symptoms experienced with Delta-9, such as paranoia, anxiety, and drowsiness, but in a milder and less intoxicating form. Ultimately, Delta-8 and Delta-9, while supposedly having different types of highs, are very similar in chemical structure.

Delta-8 is a natural chemical compound found in very small traces throughout hemp and cannabis plants. It is thought to be legal because it comes from the hemp plant and has a THC level below 0.3%. What many people do not realize is that Delta-8 falls into a legal gray area because it comes from the hemp plant, which the Federal Farm Bill from 2018 would classify as legal and is not considered a controlled substance because the hemp portion of the plant is removed. Delta-8, however, is not specifically mentioned anywhere in the Farm Bill or Agriculture and Nutrition Improvement Act of 2018, thus creating a loophole that Delta-8 is legal and does not require any age restrictions.

With this substance flying somewhat under the radar and not being tested or monitored, many chemists and scientists are concerned about the safety of Delta-8. As some people know, substances that are not FDA-approved and are not monitored or tested, have not been checked for impurities of the substance. This is why some sellers get away with selling what they are labeling as “CBD oil,” when in reality, it is really expired olive oil. The same possibilities arise with Delta-8. Unfortunately, what people are finding is that there is misleading information being advertised with the product, i.e., instead of there being less than 0.3% of THC, it actually contains very high levels of THC. Due to these inconsistencies, many states are banning the substance.

Governor Pete Ricketts of Nebraska has asked the Nebraska State Attorney General to “reconsider” the legalities and look further into the substance. Even the Drug Enforcement Administration, which is a federal level law enforcement agency, is researching if there need to be changes made to the Farm Bill in order to better regulate or eliminate this drug’s availability due to all the unknowns surrounding Delta-8.

So, why do people use Delta-8 if it does not cause as much of a high? There is a lack of research on Delta-8 due to the gray area surrounding its legality. Little to no evidence or research has been done to determine what effects Delta-8 has on people’s overall health, especially when used long term. Reports about the variant, which are found mostly online, suggest that people often use Delta-8 along with other medications, such as a supplement to medications for depression. Reports state that people are finding that Delta-8 causes them to be less nauseous, helps boost appetites, helps with pain management, and helps with overall mental health. It is also reported that it prevents people from vomiting when receiving treatments like chemotherapy for cancer. Some adverse effects of using the substance that people have reported include

confusion, anxiety, fatigue, slower heart rate, feeling numbness throughout the body, faster heart rate, and even low blood pressure.

Overall, there is very little known about Delta-8, and what we do know is not the most promising, especially with long term use. The lack of research to date to prove that it is not any less or more dangerous than Delta-9 creates concern regarding the unknown risks to which adults and youth are exposing themselves when using the substance. This drug, despite the questions regarding its legality, should be approached cautiously until there is more known about the substance and its overall effects. Regardless of legality and side effects, it should still be considered a danger to youth as it can only be assumed at this time there would be similar negative effects on the developing brain as occur with Delta-9.

## **References**

### **Ricketts asks state attorney general to review legality of Delta-8 THC**

<https://www.ketv.com/article/ricketts-asks-state-attorney-general-to-review-legality-of-delta-8-thc/37052930>

### **KETV Investigation: ‘Weed light;’ popular hemp product gets people high; DEA investigates**

<https://www.ketv.com/article/ketv-investigation-weed-light-popular-hemp-product-gets-people-high-dea-investigates/35493960>

### **What Is Delta 8?**

<https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/addiction/what-is-delta-8>

### **Delta-8-THC Promises to Get You High Without the Paranoia or Anxiety**

<https://www.discovermagazine.com/health/delta-8-thc-promises-to-get-you-high-without-the-paranoia-or-anxiety>

### **Delta-8 THC is legal in many states, but some want to ban it**

<https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/delta-8-thc-legal-many-states-some-want-ban-it-n1272270>

### **11 Severe Delta 8 THC Side Effects**

<https://www.binoidcbd.com/blogs/news/delta-8-thc-side-effects>

### **The New Reefer Madness? Poison Control Centers Sound Alarm Over ‘Legal Marijuana’ Compound Delta-8**

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/chrisroberts/2021/06/29/the-new-reefer-madness-poison-control-centers-sound-alarm-over-legal-marijuana-compound-delta-8-thc/?sh=4c64806d337d>

### **Make Sure You Read This Before Using Delta-8**

<https://guardianathletic.com/make-sure-you-read-this-before-using-delta-8>

### **‘It’s absolutely everywhere’: Delta 8, a cousin of marijuana, a hot seller in Nebraska**

[https://omaha.com/news/state-and-regional/its-absolutely-everywhere-delta-8-a-cousin-of-marijuana-a-hot-seller-in-nebraska/article\\_773c2e32-de6b-11eb-af8d-5bff55f75228.html](https://omaha.com/news/state-and-regional/its-absolutely-everywhere-delta-8-a-cousin-of-marijuana-a-hot-seller-in-nebraska/article_773c2e32-de6b-11eb-af8d-5bff55f75228.html)

## **Delta 8, cousin to marijuana's psychoactive ingredient, finds market in Lincoln**

[https://journalstar.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/delta-8-cousin-to-marijuanas-psychoactive-ingredient-finds-market-in-lincoln/article\\_8b874e64-0c60-5dc2-93e6-cafd0cdf869c.html](https://journalstar.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/delta-8-cousin-to-marijuanas-psychoactive-ingredient-finds-market-in-lincoln/article_8b874e64-0c60-5dc2-93e6-cafd0cdf869c.html)

## **What is Delta-8 THC**

<http://www.tallcopsaysstop.com/blog/what-delta-8-thc>

# Understanding Self-Injury

Self-injury, clinically known as non-suicidal self-injury or NSSI, is defined as deliberately injuring oneself without suicidal intent (The Cornell Research Program on Self-Injury and Recovery). Self-injury can be performed on any part of the body but most often occurs on hands, arms, stomach, and thighs. While severity can range from superficial wounds to lasting disfigurement, the act of self-injury is often a dangerous sign of emotional distress. Adolescents and young adults are at the highest risk for self-injury, with the average age of onset around 13. Due to the stigma and shame that can surround self-injury, accurate statistics can be difficult to capture. Several studies cite that roughly 15% of teenagers have engaged in self-injury, however, the rates are likely higher due to underreporting.

Cutting is one of the most common behaviors associated with self-injury but it can also include behaviors such as scratching, burning, pulling hair, and self-bruising (punching objects with the intention of hurting oneself or punching oneself directly). Learning that a child may be engaging in self-harm behavior can result in a range of emotions for parents and caregivers, including fear, disbelief, helplessness, shock, and sadness. Education and awareness about self-injury can increase the ability of caring adults to offer support to students. Understanding why individuals self-injure is a great place to start.



It is important to note that self-injury itself is not a mental health condition but is a behavior that can be associated with mental health conditions such as eating disorders, anxiety, depression, and PTSD. Self-injury is most often an attempt to interrupt strong emotions and pressures that seem impossible to tolerate. While research indicates there is no single cause of self-injury, possible reasons include:

- A way of coping with problems
- A way of expressing feelings that can't be put into words

- Distract from stressors of life
- Release emotional pain (emptiness, guilt, rage)
- To feel “something” besides numbness or emptiness

Those that self-injure often report that it is easier to feel the physical pain of self-injury than it is to deal with emotional pain that may be triggering the behavior. However, self-injury only provides temporary relief. It is like placing a Band-Aid on a gaping wound when stitches are needed. Thus, the underlying reasons that may trigger self-harm behaviors remain if they aren’t addressed. Discovering what is fueling the urge of the behavior is a necessary step in recovery.

Signs of self-injury will vary depending upon the person but warning signs may include:

- Scarring from cuts and burn on parts of the body that can be hidden from clothing.
- Recurring new wounds such as scrapes, cuts or abrasions, lacerations, or bruises.
- Being in possession of odd or unexplainable items, such as razor blades or needles.
- Injuries are always attributed to an “accident”.
- Needing to be alone for long periods of time (especially in bedroom or bathroom).
- Chronic interpersonal challenges leading to social withdrawal and isolation.
- Following the self-injury, the individual may experience severe distress, guilt, and shame.

If you are concerned that someone you know may be self-injuring, there are a number of supportive strategies that can help guide the individual to help. At the same time, there are some non-supportive actions to be aware of. First and foremost, avoid judgment or criticism, this can cause the individual to withdraw even more and perpetuate the cycle of self-injury. Experts also caution against “overreacting”. While self-injury can bring up an array of emotions, reacting with emotions such as shock, panic, frustration, and anger are unhelpful. To offer support, the following is recommended:

- **Learn about the problem-** understanding why a young person is self-injuring can help you see the world through their eyes.
- **Encourage communication-** bring up the subject in a calm, caring, non-confrontational way so that they feel safe talking about their feelings. For example, “I’ve noticed injuries on your body, and I want to understand what you’re going through”.
- **Listen-** by empathetically listening you can better understand what is happening and why.
- **Provide validation-** validate that self-injury serves a purpose for the individual as well as how hard it can be to talk about. For example, “It sounds like self-injury gives you a sense of relief when you are in a lot of emotional pain. That sounds like a really difficult experience for you. I appreciate your willingness to talk to me about this, I am sure it isn’t easy”.
- **Be supportive and offer encouragement-** let them know you are available whenever they want to talk or need support.
- **Encourage them to seek help-** A trained professional can assist in developing new coping techniques and strategies to stop self-injuring while helping to get to the root of the behavior.

For additional guidance, the Cornell Research Program on Self-Injury and Recovery has a helpful resource page with information for parents, caregivers, youth-serving adults, and schools.

<http://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu/resources.html>

References: American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, American Psychological Association, Cornell Research Program on Self-Injury and Recovery, Mayo Clinic, Mental Health America, National Alliance on Mental Illness



An alarming and growing trend of the production, sale and use of counterfeit pills.

What exactly are counterfeit pills. They are pills that claim and appear to be a particular prescription medication but are not. They contain different substances and chemicals than the actual medication they are represented as being. Furthermore, many of these counterfeit pills have been found to contain illicit drugs such as, methamphetamine (meth) and/or heroin or the highly addictive and deadly pharmaceutical drug, Fentanyl.

According to the Drug Enforcement Administration, one in four counterfeit pills with Fentanyl present contains a lethal dose. Only 2 milligrams can kill you, which is equal to just a few grains of salt.

While, the majority of these phony pills are made and developed in other countries, such as China, India and Mexico, counterfeit medications are also produced in the United States and the production of them in the United States continues to grow.

Generally speaking, these counterfeit pills are most often first sold and purchased on the “dark web” (Definition of Dark Web: The part of the World Wide Web that is only accessible by means of special software, allowing users and website operators to remain anonymous or untraceable) or through online social media accounts and connections.

Pain medications (opioids), such as Oxycodone, are one of the most common medications counterfeited. For those who grapple with an opioid addiction, the prospect of purchasing large amounts of Oxycodone or other opioids online without a prescription and for a fraction of the street cost is hard to pass up. These fake pills look nearly identical to the real prescription pills, the buyers/users are often unaware of how deadly they might be.

**Chart below of pharmacy prescription cost vs. street cost.**

Opioid	Avg. Prescription Price per pill	Avg. Street Price per pill
<a href="#">Vicodin</a>	\$1.50	\$5 to \$25
<a href="#">Percocet</a>	\$6	\$10 to \$15
<a href="#">Hydrocodone</a>	\$1.50	\$5 to \$20
<a href="#">Oxycodone</a>	\$6	\$12 to \$40
<a href="#">OxyContin</a>	\$6	\$50 to \$80

*Source: Portland Police Bureau/Oregon State Crime Lab*

And while pain medications are the most widely counterfeited pills, medication pills such as Adderall, which is often prescribed for attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and Xanax, which is often prescribed for anxiety disorders are also common medications that are counterfeited.

This is highly concerning as these medications tend to attract high school and college students. A large number of students have bought these pills online in effort to help them study and perform better in school or in attempt to treat a self-diagnosed disorder such as ADHD and/or anxiety. According to DEA Special Agent Debbie Webber, kids are buying pills not realizing they contain Fentanyl. “They are kids that don’t have substance use disorder, they’re naïve,

they experiment, and this experiment becomes deadly for them," they're basically playing Russian roulette with their life".

### **Signs/Symptoms of an opioid overdose:**

- Small constricted/pinpoint pupils
- face is extremely pale and/or feels clammy to the touch
- body goes limp
- fingernails or lips turn purple or blue
- vomiting
- unable to awake/unresponsive
- shallow breathing and/or heartbeat slows or stops

### **What you should do if you think someone may have overdosed on an opioid:**

- **Call 911 right away**
- Administer naloxone, if available.
- Try to keep the person awake and breathing
- Lay the person on their side to prevent choking
- Stay with the person until emergency workers arrive

### **Please click on link below to see what pharmacies offer Narcan/Naloxone**

<https://dhhs.ne.gov/Behavioral%20Health%20Documents/NaloxoneMap.pdf>

**and/or contact one of the six Regional Behavioral Health Prevention Offices, in Nebraska, that serves your county. This information can be found on the NDHHS website.**

<https://dhhs.ne.gov>

**OpiRescue** is also a free overdose support tool to recognize, reverse and report an overdose.

<https://www.rehabspot.com/treatment/paying-for-rehab/cost-of-addiction/>

<https://www.dea.gov/press-releases/2021/05/21/dea-issues-warning-over-counterfeit-pills>

<https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2021-05/Counterfeit%20Pills%20fact%20SHEET-5-13-21-FINAL.pdf>

[https://journalstar.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/suspected-cocaine-dealer-linked-to-at-least-one-lincoln-overdose-arrested-police-say/article\\_89e343ae-0f48-57a1-8b7b-90fbafd14590.html](https://journalstar.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/suspected-cocaine-dealer-linked-to-at-least-one-lincoln-overdose-arrested-police-say/article_89e343ae-0f48-57a1-8b7b-90fbafd14590.html)

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Oxford Dictionary