

Colorado Lawsuit Claims Marijuana Edibles Caused People to 'Overdose'

By [John Dyer](#)

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Most advocates of marijuana legalization say it's impossible to overdose on weed. But some unlucky folks who got more than they bargained for when they sampled marijuana-laced chocolates in Colorado disagree.

Seven people who filed a lawsuit in a Denver court allege they fell ill after eating THC-laced treats manufactured by Beyond Broadway, a company that markets weed sweets under the Full Melt brand and runs a collection of [LivWell](#) medical marijuana dispensaries in Colorado, where recreational pot became legal last year.

The plaintiffs claim they were told the chocolates didn't contain THC when they ate them at the Pot Pavilion at the Denver County Fair in August. A few hours later, though, they were in hospitals complaining about rapid heart rates, passing out, tunnel vision, and other scary symptoms.

Jordan Coombs's experience was particularly nasty.

"During the drive away from the Denver County Fair, Coombs became so sick that he projectile vomited uncontrollably in his car," the lawsuit claims. "The physicians at the emergency room diagnosed Coombs as overdosing on THC."

[Native American tribe in California announces plan to grow medical marijuana. Read more here.](#)

Workers at LivWell dispensaries refused to speak to VICE News. But the company issued a statement to 7 News Denver. "If this occurred it was without our knowledge and was not sanctioned by our company," the statement said. "We are currently investigating the matter."

A lawsuit doesn't necessarily tarnish the entire marijuana industry, of course. But [Al Jazeera](#) reports that others have fallen ill after eating too much pot. At least 56 people called Rocky Mountain Poison and Drug Center to complain about marijuana-related scares last year. Children's Hospital Colorado admitted at least 14 children younger than 10 for eating marijuana-infused foods last year. Seven of those kids went to the hospital's intensive care unit.

In April, [Richard Kirk](#) shot and killed his wife, Kristine, in their Denver area home after eating marijuana candy. A month before, a 19-year-old Congolese exchange student, [Levy Pongi](#), jumped to his death from the fourth-floor balcony of a Holiday Inn in Denver after eating a lemon poppy seed cookie that contained 6.5 servings of weed.

Those cases illustrate how eating marijuana can be dangerous, especially because the body absorbs THC more slowly through the gut, said Rutgers University psychiatry professor Petros Levounis. People who expect the same quick high they get when smoking joints often overeat when the weed doesn't kick in after they've downed a few pot brownies. When it finally takes effect, it can be overwhelming.

"You don't overdose from cannabis the same way as heroin," said Levounis. "It's not directly dangerous. But it can get you psychotic. You can get crazy. You can get so paranoid, you can end up doing crazy stuff."

[Legal pot in the US is crippling Mexican cartels. Read more here.](#)

Today's super-strong strains of marijuana make things worse, Levounis added. In the 1990s, it was rare to see a patient incapacitated by pot. Now it's increasingly routine. "It's not an usual event that would trigger the entire hospital saying 'Oh my god let's go see this weird case down in the emergency room,'" he said.

A worker at the Evergreen Apothecary in Denver, which sells [Full Melt](#) chocolates, was skeptical of the lawsuit's claims. "All the overdoses I've encountered have literally led people to go to sleep," said Justin Small, the store's "bartender."

"If it is mixed with other drugs, there is a lot better chance they can do something psychotic," Small said. "Nine times out of 10, they just go to sleep. Most people who go to the hospital go for severe dehydration."

Levounis wasn't so comfortable making generalizations about why some people act bizarrely after eating or smoking weed. "Are more people predisposed to develop psychotic symptoms?" he asked. "It's unclear if pre-existing issues affect things."

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