

TALK WITH YOUR TEEN ABOUT MARIJUANA

A TIP SHEET FOR PARENTS

WHAT IS MARIJUANA?

Marijuana, one of the most often-used drugs in the U.S., is a product of the plant, *Cannabis sativa*. The main active chemical in marijuana, also present in other forms of cannabis, is THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol). Of the roughly 400 chemicals found in the cannabis plant, THC affects the brain the most. It is a mind-altering chemical that gives marijuana users a high.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Marijuana itself is a green or gray mixture of dried, shredded flowers and leaves of the plant.

WHAT ARE SOME TERMS FOR MARIJUANA?

Bud, blunt, chronic, dab, dope, ganja, grass, green, hash, herb, joint, loud, mary jane, mj, pot, reefer, sinsemilla, skunk, smoke, trees, wax, marijuana

HOW IS IT USED?

Many roll loose marijuana into a cigarette (called a "joint") or smoke it in a pipe or water pipe (called a "bong") or in a cigar (called a "blunt"). A single intake of smoke is called a "hit." Marijuana can also be mixed into food or brewed as tea and ingested.

In states where marijuana has become legalized, more and more marijuana "edibles" are seen in retail establishments where marijuana is sold, including baked goods and candy that closely or even exactly resemble well-known foods (example: brownies, chocolate, cookies, pizza or gummy bears).

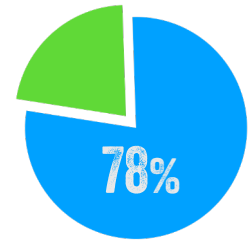
Marijuana can also be vaporized. In addition, there are marijuana concentrates such as hash, wax, tinctures and oil.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF MARIJUANA USE ON TEENS?

Cannabis, can be unsafe for teenagers for a variety of reasons. Here are some of the most important ones:

- 1. Brain development:** The human brain continues to develop until the mid-20s, and marijuana use during this critical period can harm brain development. Studies have shown that marijuana use can interfere with memory, attention, and learning, as well as lower IQ scores.
- 2. Mental health:** Teenagers who use marijuana are at an increased risk of developing mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, and psychosis. Studies have shown that marijuana use can worsen symptoms in people with pre-existing mental health conditions.
- 3. Addiction:** Marijuana can be addictive, and teenagers who use it are more likely to develop a substance use disorder. Studies have shown that the younger someone starts using marijuana, the more likely they are to become addicted.
- 4. Impaired driving:** Marijuana use can impair driving ability, and teenagers who use marijuana are more likely to be involved in car accidents. This is particularly concerning because car accidents are a leading cause of death for teenagers.
- 5. Legal consequences:** Marijuana is illegal for teenagers to use in most places, and getting caught with it can have serious legal consequences. This can include fines, community service, and even jail time in some cases.

MOST MARIJUANA USE BEGINS IN ADOLESCENCE



78% of the 2.4 million people who **began using** in the last year were aged **12 to 20**.¹

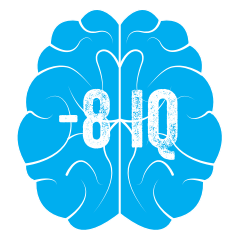
AS PERCEPTION OF HARM DECREASES...



Teen marijuana use increases.²

EVERY DAY,
3,287 TEENS
USE MARIJUANA
FOR THE FIRST TIME¹

THE TEEN BRAIN IS STILL
DEVELOPING AND
VULNERABLE TO DRUG USE.



Regular heavy use by teens can lead to an IQ drop of up to **8 points**.³

Talking to your teenager about marijuana use can be difficult, but it's critical to their success. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, 38.9% of high school seniors reported using marijuana in the past year, and 22.1% reported using it in the past month. Additionally, 6.5% of 8th graders and 18.5% of 10th graders reported using marijuana in the past year.

Research suggests that marijuana use during adolescence may have long-term effects on brain development and lead to cognitive impairment, including lower IQ, memory and attention deficits, and decreased verbal fluency. Additionally, frequent or heavy marijuana use during adolescence has been associated with an increased risk of developing psychotic disorders, such as schizophrenia.

It is important to have open and honest conversations about drug use to help your child make healthy choices. Here are some tips to help guide your conversation:

1. Start by asking open-ended questions

Ask your teen open-ended questions to encourage them to share their thoughts and feelings about marijuana. Ask what they know about it, if they've been exposed to it, and what they think about its use.

2. Listen and be non-judgmental

Listen to your teen's perspective and be non-judgmental. Avoid lecturing or talking down to them. Instead, try to have a two-way conversation where you both share your opinions and concerns.

3. Bring in the facts

Discuss the facts about marijuana. Explain what it is, how it's used, and the risks associated with use. Be clear about the legal consequences of using marijuana as well.

4. Discuss the risks and consequences

Discuss the risks and consequences associated with marijuana use. Be clear about the potential harm to brain development, mental health, addiction, impaired driving, and legal consequences. Talk about the short-term and long-term effects and the importance of avoiding these risks.

5. Set clear boundaries

Make sure your teen knows your expectations regarding drug use. Set clear boundaries and consequences for breaking those boundaries. For example, you may want to set rules around curfew or limit your teen's access to certain places or people.

6. Offer support

Let your teen know that you're there to support them, no matter what. Encourage them to come to you if they have questions or concerns. Promise them, if they come to you for help, you will not punish them but help them to find resources, such as counseling or support groups, if they need it.

7. Follow up

After your initial conversation, follow up with your teen to see how they're doing. Ask if they have any questions or concerns. Continue to have open and honest conversations with your teen about drug use and other sensitive topics.

HEAVY MARIJUANA USE BY TEENS IS LINKED TO⁴:

EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES



LOWER grades and exam scores



LESS likely to graduate from High School or college



LESS likely to enroll in college

LIFE OUTCOMES



LOWER satisfaction with life



MORE LIKELY to earn a **lower** income



MORE LIKELY to be unemployed



MORE LIKELY to have mental health issues as an adult

1. NSDUH, SAMSHA, 2014; 2. MTF Survey; 3. Meier et al 2012; 4. MTF Survey; Cobb, Clark et al, 2013; Slins et al 2014; Tucker et 32005; Home et al. 204; Vo cow et a 2014; Ferosson and Boden 2008; Brooks et 3 2013