

Keeping it Current Raising Healthy Teens Marijuana

Did you know?

The strength of marijuana has increased significantly since the 1960s?

From the 1960s through the 80s, the THC content in marijuana was less than 2%. In the 90s it rose to 4%. As recently as 2017, THC content had risen to 17-28% and today can even be higher, up to 95% in concentrated products. The increased potency has been associated with an increased risk of addiction and worsening mental health problems.



Marijuana refers to the dried leaves, flowers, stems, and seeds from the *Cannabis sativa* or *Cannabis indica* plant. The plant contains the mind-altering chemical THC and other similar compounds.

Cannabis (marijuana) is one of the most used drugs in the United States and its use, which is widespread among young people, is growing. At the same time, the perception of how harmful marijuana use can be is declining among adolescents and young adults, trends which evidence suggests have increased following cannabis legalization. Not only that, but CUD (Cannabis Use Disorder) prevalence has risen since the early 2000s.

People smoke marijuana in hand-rolled cigarettes (joints), blunts, or in pipes or water pipes (bongs). People can mix marijuana in food (*edibles*), such as brownies, cookies, or candy, or brew it as tea. A newly popular method of use is smoking or eating different forms of THC-rich resins.



The Facts

- Almost 40% of high school students have reported trying marijuana, according to the CDC.
- In 2019, 37% of US high school students 22% reported use in the past 30 days.
- When a person smokes marijuana, THC (the active chemical in marijuana) quickly passes from the lungs into the bloodstream. Smoking takes just seconds to minutes, but an edible containing THC typically takes 30 to 60 minutes after being eaten and digested.
- The effect of marijuana on perception and coordination is responsible for serious impairments in learning, associative processes, and psychomotor behavior (driving abilities).

- Short-term effects include: Problems with memory and learning, distorted perception, difficulty in thinking and problem-solving, and loss of coordination
- Long-term effects of regular use can lead to physical dependence and withdrawal following discontinuation, as well as psychological addiction or dependence.
- The [American Association of Poison Control Centers](#) reports receiving 4,329 calls about poisonings for kids under 12 years involving cannabis edibles containing THC — a significant increase from 3,132 calls in 2020

The Risks

- **Brain health:** Marijuana can cause permanent IQ loss of as much as 8 points when people start using it at a young age. These IQ points do not come back, even after quitting marijuana.
- **Mental health:** Studies link marijuana use to depression, anxiety, suicide planning, and psychotic episodes. It is not known, however, if marijuana use is the cause of these conditions.
- **Athletic Performance:** Research shows that marijuana affects timing, movement, and coordination, which can harm athletic performance.
- **Driving:** People who drive under the influence of marijuana can experience dangerous effects: slower reactions, lane weaving, decreased coordination, and difficulty reacting to signals and sounds on the road.
- **Daily life:** Using marijuana can affect performance and how well people do in life. Research shows that people who use marijuana are more likely to have relationship problems, worse educational outcomes, lower career achievement, and reduced life satisfaction.
- **Potential for addiction:** Approximately 3 in 10 people who use marijuana have a marijuana use disorder
- **Marijuana overdose:** The concentration and strength of THC in edible products is difficult to measure and is often unknown. Consuming even a small amount of THC in a gummy or baked item can cause kids to experience symptoms of a marijuana overdose.

Warning Signs

- Smelling like marijuana
- Red or bloodshot eyes
- Relaxed state or sleepiness
- Delayed reaction times
- Change in daily attitude or mood swings
- Laziness/lack of motivation
- Unable to focus impacting school work (drop in grades)
- The presence of marijuana-related paraphernalia
- Paranoia or anxiousness
- Increased appetite



VISIT US ONLINE: [AHC-STL.org](https://www.AHC-STL.org)

<https://www.samhsa.gov/marijuana>

<https://nida.nih.gov/publications/drugfacts/cannabis-marijuana>

<https://www.cdc.gov/marijuana/health-effects/teens.html>

<https://www.addictioncenter.com/drugs/marijuana/symptoms-signs/>