

10 Questions About Cannabis Use And Teens



1 WHAT IS CANNABIS?

Cannabis is a drug that can be produced from plants. The cannabis plant contains many chemicals, including two main active ingredients:

THC affects the brain and produces the high. Over the years, levels of THC have continued to rise. Higher levels can lead to harmful effects.

CBD is currently being studied to determine possible medical benefits.

Synthetic cannabinoids (created in a lab) are chemicals that are sprayed onto dried plant material. Synthetic cannabinoids are more dangerous than cannabis.

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WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Cannabis: like dried tea leaves; usually green or brown.
Hashish: made from the plant resin; solid or paste; usually brown or black.
A concentrate (aka oil/wax/dabs/shatter): made from the plant; oily, waxy or pasty; usually yellow or brown.

3 WHAT IS IT CALLED?

Pot, weed, chronic, bud, herb, kush, joint, loud, mary jane, mj, blunt, dab, dope, ganja, grass, hash, reefer, skunk, smoke, trees, wax.

Synthetic cannabinoids can be called: spice, K2, Cloud 9, mojo.



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HOW IS IT USED?

There is no “safe” amount of cannabis. Using more cannabis increases possibility of harm and addiction. Compared to cannabis that your parents may have used the cannabis of today is much more potent (up to 15X stronger).

Inhaled: Rolled into a joint (cigarette) or blunt (cigar) and smoked; through a bong (water pipe); or in a vaporizer (vape). Effects are immediate and last for hours.

Eaten: Usually added to cookies, muffins, lollipops, gummy candy and brownies (aka edibles). Cannabis tea is also an edible. Effects are delayed by hours and can last up to 12 hours. This can result in eating too much and overdosing or getting really sick.

Symptoms of an overdose or “greening out” include: vomiting, psychosis and panic.

5 WHY DO TEENS USE CANNABIS?

After alcohol, cannabis is the most common drug used by Canadian teens. Many people may use cannabis to:

- get high
- have fun and relax
- escape from routine
- try something new
- fit in/be social
- cope or focus

Using cannabis to cope is not a healthy strategy.

Try music, reading, sports, hobbies, volunteering, hanging out with friends or talking with others about how you feel.



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HOW DOES CANNABIS AFFECT YOUR BRAIN?

Your brain is your most important asset. Regular cannabis use can have a negative impact on how your brain grows and develops.

7 HOW CAN CANNABIS AFFECT YOU?

Although many teens think that regular cannabis use isn't harmful, the reality is the opposite. Regular cannabis use can cause both short and long-term harm. Cannabis may make you feel relaxed, happy or high. But at the same time it decreases your co-ordination and impairs your judgment, problem solving, memory and learning. It can also cause anxiety, panic and psychosis.

Do not drive after using cannabis or alcohol and do not get into a car if the driver has been using cannabis or alcohol. Cannabis impairs driving ability, increasing risk for accidents – including fatal ones. Driving while high or intoxicated is illegal, regardless of the drug used.

Cannabis CAN be addictive. This is called Cannabis Use Disorder. The earlier a person starts using cannabis and the more cannabis a person uses, the more likely they are to become addicted. Using cannabis with other drugs can increase the risk of harm without giving a better high.

8 WHAT SHOULD I DO IN AN EMERGENCY?

If someone you know has “greened out” follow these steps (SJSS):

- S** bring them to a safe place
- J** if they aren't vomiting, give them lots of fruit juice
- S** if they've passed out, lie them on their side and call 911
- S** if they're panicky or paranoid, stay with them to provide reassurance and support

If you're uncomfortable with what's happening, or suspect synthetic cannabinoid use, call 911.

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HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT CANNABIS USE?

It's important to get the facts about cannabis use. There is a lot of misinformation about cannabis out there. Get informed so that you can TALK SMART. Remember, one of the most common factors for using any drug is peer pressure. You are your own person. You can make your own decision about what to do. But you need to make a properly informed decision.

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HOW DO I LEARN MORE?

There is so much more to learn about cannabis so that you can TALK SMART. Visit teenmentalhealth.org/cannabis to get the information that you need.

