

Marijuana

The most commonly used drug among teens, second to alcohol, is marijuana. Our culture often glamorizes the use of marijuana, especially the media and music industry. The misconception is that it's harmless, which is not the case. Marijuana is an addictive drug that can have serious risks and consequences, especially for teens. As parents, it is imperative to talk openly with your teen and pre-teen about marijuana use because 41% of teen marijuana smokers say they began before the age of 15, and 1 in 6 teen marijuana smokers will become addicted (National Institute on Drug Abuse).

What is Marijuana?



Marijuana is a dried mixture derived from the hemp plant, and has many names: pot, weed, grass, cannabis, hash, and hash oil. It contains nearly 400 chemicals, including THC, a mind-altering drug. The amount of THC determines the strength of the marijuana and its effects, and the THC content has only been increasing over the past decade (NIDA). Many users roll loose marijuana into a cigarette ("joint") or smoke it in a pipe or water pipe ("bong") or in a cigar ("blunt"). It can also be vaporized and used in a vape pen. A single intake of smoke is called a "hit." Marijuana affects the brain and leads to short-term memory loss, distorted perception, poor judgment, and impaired motor skills.

Marijuana Use and Your Teen

It is normal for teens to experience a wide variety of intense emotions. It is a part of their development, but it can oftentimes feel overwhelming and never-ending. In today's culture, teens are experiencing an unprecedented level of stress, anxiety, and depression, and many teens don't know how to deal with these feelings. In response, some teens turn to marijuana to relax because the relief is instant. Ironically, marijuana has been linked to depression, anxiety, and a loss of motivation. It can radically alter the course of a teen's life, diminishing a teen's full potential.



Signs of marijuana (or drug) use include: Carelessness with grooming, extreme mood changes, poor academic performance, unexplained use of money, loss of interest in hobbies or sports, changes in eating and sleeping habits, and deteriorating relationships with family and friends.

Physical symptoms of marijuana use include: Uncoordinated movement, silly or giggly for no reason, bloodshot eyes, difficulty remembering, odor on clothes or in room, wearing clothing or jewelry that promotes drug use, and use of incense or deodorizers.

How to Prevent the Use of Marijuana



- As parents, YOU are the biggest influence in your teen's life. Do not be afraid to talk openly and often with your teen about the dangers of marijuana use.
- Set high expectations and clear limits.
- Stay actively engaged in your teen's life. Get to know your teen's friends and their parents.
- Help your teen find healthy ways to deal with his/her emotions. Be a good listener.
- [Download](#) your own free "Marijuana Talk Kit" by the Partnership for Drug Free Kids, which includes scripts for talking with your teen about marijuana.

SOURCES: [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#), [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), [Partnership for Drug Free Kids](#)