

**Another telling sign is the presence of drug paraphernalia**—any equipment, product, or material of any kind that is modified for making, using, or concealing a controlled substance. Examples of drug paraphernalia include the following:

- Rolling paper (a specialty paper used for making a marijuana cigarette);
- Cigar (hollowed out and filled with marijuana to make what is referred to as a “blunt”);
- Pipe (a device to smoke marijuana);
- Bong (a filtration device to smoke marijuana);
- Roach clip (a metal clip used to hold a marijuana cigarette);
- Electronic cigarette (a device to smoke marijuana extracts); and
- Grinder (a tool that breaks marijuana up into smaller bits).

## TAKE ACTION



**Use these tips to talk with your teen:**

- Check in frequently to see how they are doing;
- Choose informal times to talk, such as in the car, during dinner, or while watching TV;
- Be clear and consistent about your expectations regarding marijuana and other drug use;
- Establish family agreements together for social and extracurricular activities;
- Let them know you care and are always there for them; and
- Continue talking with your teens as they get older.



**Help your teen create an “exit plan”** in case he or she is offered or faced with a difficult decision about marijuana. Peer pressure can be powerful, so coming up with realistic action steps and practicing them together in a safe environment will prepare and empower your teen to make good choices when it matters.

Research suggests that one of the most influential factors when a teen is growing up is a strong, open relationship with a parent or caregiver.

**For more information about how to talk with your teen about marijuana, visit**  
[www.underagedrinking.samhsa.gov](http://www.underagedrinking.samhsa.gov)  
and  
[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov).

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PEP20-03-01-004

# TALKING WITH YOUR TEEN ABOUT MARIJUANA:

## Keeping Your Kids Safe



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It's never too late to start talking with your teen about the risks of marijuana use. As teens age, they make more decisions on their own and face greater temptation and peer pressure. Though it may not seem like it, teens really do hear your concerns. It's important you help them understand what marijuana is, and why they shouldn't use it.

## WHAT IS MARIJUANA?

Marijuana refers to the dried leaves, flowers, stems, and seeds from the *Cannabis sativa* or *Cannabis indica* plant. It is a psychoactive drug that contains close to 500 chemicals, including THC, a mind-altering compound that causes harmful health effects. Marijuana use is prevalent among teens and young adults, and according to SAMHSA's 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, an estimated 3.3 million youths ages 12-17 reported using marijuana in the past year.

Marijuana use tends to increase with age. While 2.5 percent of youths ages 12-13 reported consuming marijuana in the past year, that number increased to 11.7 percent of those ages 14-15 and 25.3 percent by ages 16-17.

## WHY ARE YOUNG PEOPLE USING MARIJUANA?

Teens and young adults use marijuana for many reasons, including curiosity, peer pressure, and wanting to fit in with friends. Some use it to cope with anxiety, stress, and even depression. Ultimately, many things factor into why some people decide to use marijuana, including their environment at home, at school, and in the community.

The perception of the dangers of marijuana use is declining and, increasingly, young people today do not consider marijuana use a risky behavior. This is partially due to the changes to some states' policies on the legalization of marijuana and recreational use. Marijuana remains illegal at the federal level, even though many states have legalized its use.

Make sure your teen understands that marijuana is addictive. In fact, research shows that 1 in 6 youths who start using the drug before the age of 18 can become addicted.

## HOW ARE YOUNG PEOPLE USING MARIJUANA?

Marijuana can be consumed in a variety of ways—including smoking, vaping, oils, teas, and edibles. Edibles have become popular because people can mix marijuana into their favorite foods, such as brownies, cookies, and candy. However, edibles are dangerous because they can lead to accidental ingestion or overconsumption. Since it takes longer to digest edibles and feel their effects, people may consume more at one time to expedite that process.

## KNOW THE RISKS AND HARMS OF MARIJUANA USE

Marijuana use among teens and young adults can harm brain development and cause other negative impacts. Additionally, the amount of THC in marijuana has steadily climbed; today's

marijuana has three times the concentration of THC compared to 25 years ago, increasing the impact on the brain. Make sure you know the risks of marijuana use and are prepared to talk with your teen about them.

### Common risks include, but are not limited to:

- Issues with attention, concentration, problem solving, learning, and memory;
- Poor academic and job performance;
- Lack of balance and coordination;
- Poor judgment and decision-making;
- Less life satisfaction;
- Relationship problems;
- Increased risk of mental issues; and
- Potential for addiction.

## IDENTIFY THE SIGNS

Recognizing signs of marijuana use can be difficult if you don't know what to look for. Be aware of any noticeable changes in your teen's behavior, as it might indicate he or she is using marijuana.

### Common signs include, but are not limited to:

- Unusual laughing, coordination issues, or forgetfulness;
- Bloodshot eyes or repeated use of eye drops;
- Strange smelling clothes or bedroom;
- Frequent use of incense and other deodorizers;
- Drug-themed clothing, jewelry, or décor; and
- Unexplained lack of money or frequent requests for money.

