



## LET'S TALK CANNABIS

# CANNABIS AND YOUTH

Between school, sports, family, and college applications, you've got a lot on your plate. But cannabis (marijuana, hashish, weed, pot, etc.) is not going to help. These facts about how cannabis use influences your body and brain will help you make positive decisions about your health and your future.

### Cannabis Affects Your Health

- Like cigarettes, smoking or vaping cannabis is harmful to your lungs. The smoke from cannabis has many of the same toxins and chemicals found in cigarette smoke, and when inhaled it can increase your risk of developing lung problems. <sup>1,2</sup>
- The way cannabis is grown has changed and some plants now have higher levels of THC. High levels of THC can lead to poisoning, especially with edibles like cookies. <sup>3,4,5</sup>
- The additives, tools, and high temperatures used for vaporizing cannabis may expose you to toxic substances, which may cause serious lung injury.
- Regular cannabis use has been linked to anxiety, depression, and suicide, especially for teens with a family history of mental illness. <sup>6,7,8</sup>
- Cannabis use increases the risk of schizophrenia, although it is not common. The more cannabis you use, the higher the risk. <sup>9</sup>
- Using cannabis as a teen can lead to cannabis dependence and increase your risk for using or abusing other substances and illegal drugs. <sup>10,11</sup>

### Cannabis Affects Your Brain

- Your brain is still developing. Using cannabis regularly in your teens and early 20s may lead to physical changes in your brain. <sup>12</sup>

- Research shows that when you use cannabis your memory, learning, and attention are harmed. Some studies suggest a permanent impact as well. <sup>13</sup>

### Most Teens Are Not Using Cannabis

- In 2017, most high school students in Vermont reported they were not using cannabis. Only about 24 percent reported using cannabis in the past 30 days. <sup>14</sup>

### Cannabis Impacts Your Goals

- The harmful effects of cannabis on your brain may impact your educational and professional goals and how successful you are in life. <sup>15</sup> Research shows that if you start using cannabis before you are age 18 or use cannabis regularly, you may be at higher risk for:
  - Skipping classes. <sup>16</sup>
  - Getting lower grades. <sup>11</sup>
  - Dropping out of school. <sup>17</sup>
  - Unemployment or not getting the job that you'd like to have. <sup>17,18</sup>

### Cannabis Affects Your Driving

- Cannabis can negatively affect the skills you need to drive safely, including reaction time, coordination, and concentration. <sup>19</sup>
- Driving under the influence of cannabis increases your risk of getting into a car crash. <sup>20</sup>

## If You Break the Law

- Anyone under age 21 who is caught in possession of cannabis (1 ounce or less) or hashish (5 grams or less) is guilty of a civil violation. Offenders will be referred to the Court Diversion Program and required enrolled in the Youth Substance Abuse Safety Program.<sup>21</sup> Failure to complete the program successfully will result in fines and a driver's license suspension.

For more information on Vermont laws regarding cannabis, visit:

Vermont Legislature:

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/>

Vermont Cannabis Control Board:

<https://ccb.vermont.gov/>

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