



Youth and Cannabis

It is legal for adults 21 or older to possess, consume and cultivate cannabis in California. Sale of cannabis from licensed retail outlets will become legal January 1, 2018. If you are 18 or older, you can use cannabis if you have a current qualifying physician's recommendation or a valid county-issued medical marijuana identification card. Here are some important facts you should know.



Cannabis Affects Your Health

- Like cigarettes, smoking 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.¹
- Regular cannabis use has been linked to anxiety, depression, and suicide, especially for teens with a family history of mental illness.^{2,3,4}
- Cannabis use increases the risk of schizophrenia, although it is not common. The more cannabis you use, the higher the risk.⁵
- Using cannabis as a teen can lead to cannabis dependence and increase your risk for using or abusing other substances and illegal drugs.^{6,7}

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.⁸
- Research shows that when you use cannabis your memory, learning, and attention are harmed. Some studies suggest a permanent impact as well.⁹

Most Teens Are Not Using Cannabis

- In 2016, most high school students in California reported they were not using cannabis. Only about 15 percent (less than 1 in 5) reported using cannabis in the past 30 days.¹⁰

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.¹¹ Research shows that if you start using cannabis before you are 18 or use cannabis regularly you may be at higher risk for:
 - Skipping classes¹¹
 - Getting lower grades¹²
 - Dropping out of school¹³
 - Unemployment or not getting the job that you'd like to have^{7,14}

Cannabis Affects Your Driving

- Cannabis can negatively affect the skills you need to drive safely, including reaction time, coordination, and concentration.¹⁵
- Driving under the influence of cannabis increases your risk of getting into a car crash.¹⁶

If You Break the Law

- If you are under 21 and caught in possession of cannabis you will be required to complete drug education or counseling and community service (unless you have a current qualifying physician's recommendation or a valid county-issued medical marijuana identification card).¹⁷

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- 8 Albert Batalla, Sagnik Bhattacharyya, Murat Yucel, Paolo Fusar-Poli, Jose Alexandre Crippa, Santiago Nogue, Marta Torrens, et al. 2013. "Structural and Functional Imaging Studies in Chronic Cannabis Users: A Systematic Review of Adolescent and Adult Findings." *PLoS ONE*. 8(2): e55821. (Reviewed in: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine. 2017. The health effects of cannabis and cannabinoids: The current state of evidence and recommendations for research. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. P. 271-275). (Reviewed in: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine. 2017. The health effects of cannabis and cannabinoids: The current state of evidence and recommendations for research. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. P. 271-275).
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