

CANNABIS AND YOUTH

FACTS FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

WHAT ARE THE BASICS OF CANNABIS?

Cannabis is a species of plant. It can be found naturally around the world and is grown by individuals and organizations on farms and in enclosed labs.

- ▶ Marijuana is a cannabis product known for its high THC levels.
- ▶ THC is another natural compound found in cannabis. This compound can make users feel “high.”

FORMS of THC:

Delta-8*, Delta-9, and Delta-10 are forms of THC and can be impairing or intoxicating. Delta-9 is the more potent form.

* See FDA warning at [www.fda.gov search Delta-8](https://www.fda.gov/search/Delta-8)

- ▶ **CBD** is a natural compound found in cannabis. CBD does not cause a “high” but can still affect the user.
- ▶ **Common names:** weed, pot, grass. Learn more about [terms and devices](#) from the CDC.
- ▶ **Hemp** is another part of the cannabis plant that has lower THC levels than marijuana.

EFFECTS OF THC ON PEOPLE:

Effects can vary across products and people and may include:

- ▶ Relaxed or “high” feeling
- ▶ Slurred speech, racing heart
- ▶ Slower reactions, less concentration
- ▶ Confusion, anxiety, panic or paranoia



LONG-TERM IMPACT ON ADOLESCENTS:

- ▶ Harmful to the developing teen brain
- ▶ Academic difficulties
- ▶ Increased accidents and injuries
- ▶ Worsening of underlying mental health conditions
- ▶ Risk for addiction

HOW IS CANNABIS USED?

Cannabis is often smoked, vaped or consumed as edibles. When vaped, it is often in a highly concentrated form.

EDIBLES AND YOUTH

Edibles are food and drink products made with cannabis-derived THC. The THC compound can come naturally from the cannabis plant, or it can be synthetically created from CBD. THC edibles can cause impairment if the amount of THC is high enough to cause intoxication.

Edibles can come in many forms, including:

- ▶ Gummy candies
- ▶ Sodas and juices
- ▶ Chocolates
- ▶ Cookies and other treats

CONSUMPTION:



When consuming edibles, or smoking cannabis, not all people experience the same thing.

Some EFFECTS may:



TAKE UP to 2 hours to **KICK-IN**

and **LAST UP** to 10 hours



Under MN current law, Hemp-derived THC edibles are legal for sale/use/possession that contain no more than 5mg per serving and 50mg per package.

CANNABIS IS ADDICTIVE:

Over the past few decades, the amount of THC in cannabis products has steadily climbed.

Research shows that:

- ▶ 1-in-6 people who start using the drug before the age of 18 can become addicted.
- ▶ 1-in-10 adults who use the drug can become addicted.

TODAY'S MARIJUANA HAS

3x

THE STRENGTH OF THC COMPARED

TO 25 YEARS AGO



1998



2023

SIGNS OF USE

Cannabis use can be difficult to detect, yet unusual odors, bloodshot eyes, or shifts in mood/behavior is common. Caregivers might observe more teen secrecy, photos/videos on phones or find devices like pipes or vapes. Long term, teens can show a decline in grades, changes in friends, activities, or mood.



NO AMOUNT OF THC IS SAFE FOR THE DEVELOPING TEEN BRAIN.



CAREGIVER ACTIONS:

- ▶ Stay informed, watch for signs
- ▶ Encourage family meals and staying active in hobbies or sports.
- ▶ Be a role model. Don't use in front of youth.
- ▶ Talk early and often; express clear disapproval of use
- ▶ Store or lock cannabis safely and out of reach of children and pets
- ▶ Driving while impaired by cannabis is illegal. Other activities can be unsafe too such as boating, biking, snowboarding or operating machinery.

RESOURCES:

Search "cannabis" on these websites:

- ▶ [samhsa.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov)
- ▶ [mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org)
- ▶ [nida.nih.gov](https://www.nida.nih.gov)
- ▶ [MDH Cannabis and your health](#)
- ▶ [MN Office of Cannabis Management](#)

MENTAL HEALTH



Everyone processes cannabis products differently. An individual's weight, metabolism, gender, and eating habits can affect how quickly a product gets absorbed into the body.

Cannabis use can worsen mental health conditions. If used frequently, cannabis might increase the risk of depression worsen symptoms, increase mental health emergencies, or counteract with psychosis medications.

Research shows that cannabis use increases the risk of psychosis for those at-risk to mental illness.

CANNABIS, PREGNANCY AND BABY DEVELOPMENT:



Cannabis products can affect baby development

Cannabis use during pregnancy may cause fetal growth restriction, premature birth, stillbirth, and problems with brain development. THC can also be passed from a mother to her baby through breast milk, further impacting a child's healthy development. It is unsafe to smoke cannabis around children including in cars or homes.

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO IF THERE IS USE?

- ▶ Plan and talk when it is a good time.
- ▶ Be calm, ask open ended questions for understanding.
- ▶ Listen and agree on the next best steps and appropriate consequences.
- ▶ Keep a positive connection to rebuild trust for guidance and support. Fighting or shaming only damages relationships.
- ▶ If addiction is a concern, seek guidance from your pediatrician, school counselor or social worker. No medications are currently available to treat a cannabis use disorder, but behavioral support can be effective.



Watch for poisoning or overdose concerns. Signs could include extreme anxiety, hallucinations, seizures, or unresponsiveness. If a child consumes THC, call the poison control hotline immediately at 1-800-222-1222 or call 911 in the case of an overdose.



This factsheet originated from Dakota County and was modified with permission for caregivers.