



# Marijuana Use and Teens

## What Parents Need to Know

The teen years are a time of rapid growth, exploration, and onset of risk taking. Taking risks with new behaviors provides kids and teens the opportunity to test their skills and abilities and discover who they are. But, some risk behaviors—such as using marijuana—can have harmful and long-lasting effects on a teen’s health and well-being.

### FAST Facts

24%



DuPage County 12<sup>th</sup> graders who reported having used marijuana in the past 30 days.<sup>1</sup>

Research shows that **marijuana use can have permanent effects on the developing brain** when use begins in adolescence, especially with regular or heavy use.<sup>2</sup>



Frequent or long-term marijuana use is linked to **school dropout and lower educational achievement**.<sup>3</sup>

**1 in 6 teens** who repeatedly use marijuana can become addicted.  
- CDC



2x-3x

Marijuana is **2-3 times more potent today**.  
- AACAP

LEAVE YOUR MARK

### ► Marijuana and the teen brain<sup>3</sup>

Unlike adults, the teen brain is actively developing and often will not be fully developed until the mid 20s. Marijuana use during this period may harm the developing teen brain.

- **Problems** with memory and learning.
- **Impaired** coordination.
- **Difficulty thinking** and problem solving.
- **Difficulty** maintaining attention.

### ► Negative effects on school and social life

Marijuana use in adolescence or early adulthood can have a serious impact on a teen’s life.

#### **Decline in school performance.**

Students who use marijuana may get lower grades and may be more likely to drop out of high school than their peers who do not use.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Increased risk of mental health issues.**

Marijuana use has been linked to a range of mental health problems in teens such as depression or anxiety.<sup>5</sup> Psychosis has also been seen in teens at higher risk like those with a family history.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Impaired driving.**

Driving while impaired by any substance, including marijuana, is dangerous. Marijuana negatively affects a number of skills required for safe driving, such as reaction time, coordination, and concentration.<sup>7, 8</sup>

#### **Potential for addiction.**

Research shows that about 1 in 6 teens who repeatedly use marijuana can become addicted, which means that they may make unsuccessful efforts to quit using marijuana or may give up important activities with friends and family in favor of using marijuana. - CDC

### ► References

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