

# connection

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## What is the Big Deal About Marijuana?

Marijuana is the most used illicit drug in the United States. It comes from the hemp plant, *Cannabis sativa*. Marijuana is made up of more than 100 different chemicals called cannabinoids. The two main cannabinoids are THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol) and CBD (cannabidiol). THC is the psychoactive ingredient. It is what produces the high. CBD has a calming effect and counteracts the psychoactive effects of THC. THC concentrations are directly related to CBD concentrations. Increasing THC typically results in lower CBD concentrations; decreasing THC results in higher CBD concentrations.



## How is it used?

Marijuana is consumed in a variety of ways. The most common way is still inhalation. However, people don't just smoke it. They inhale marijuana by vaping, dabbing and using gravity bong, all of which claim to produce a stronger high.

Marijuana is also consumed by using concentrates or hash oil, which is extracted from the plant and concentrated into a wax. Oils can be consumed by vaping or dabbing or put into edibles like brownies, cakes, cookies, gummy bears, lollipops, and chocolate. THC levels in oil usually range from 60% -90%, which is about four times stronger than found in a marijuana plant. When marijuana is consumed in foods, the drug effects are delayed, usually 30 minutes to an hour, which can cause users to consume more THC than they intended. A high percent of THC or a large quantity of THC may act as a hallucinogen.

## It isn't what it used to be

In 1995, the average amount of THC in marijuana was 4%. Today the average is 15%. Concentrates, oils, and extracts average more than 50% THC. Most research about THC effects have been conducted on substances under 10% THC. More research is needed on the effects of higher levels of THC.



## Teen use (everyone is doing it, Mom)

"The majority of Madison and St. Clair County 10th graders see little to no risk of harm from smoking marijuana"

According to the 2018 Illinois Youth Survey, 17% of Madison County 10th graders and 21% of St. Clair County 10th graders are using marijuana on a regular basis.

**This means more than three-quarters of the 10th graders in Madison and St. Clair counties ARE NOT regularly using marijuana.**

However, 50% of 10th graders in Madison County and 57% in St. Clair County said they perceive "no to slight risk" of harming themselves if they use marijuana once or twice a week. Decreased perception of harm is linked to increased use.<sup>2</sup>

# Harmful to teens

Brains are not fully developed until we are in our mid-twenties, so using any substance as a teenager can have long lasting consequences. Short term effects of using marijuana include problems with learning and memory, distorted perception, loss of motor coordination, increased heart rate, and anxiety.

The longer someone uses a substance, the more dependent they become. If teens use marijuana to cope with anxiety, depression, stress, or even to fit in with other teens, they are stunting their ability to manage those situations naturally. This leads to further use. "Scientific evidence shows that marijuana use during teen years could potentially lower a person's IQ and interferes with other aspects of functioning and well-being."<sup>6</sup>

# Marijuana is addictive

Nine percent of people who try marijuana abuse it or become dependent. That number jumps to 17% among people who try it before age 18. Marijuana may be less addictive than other substances such as nicotine, alcohol and heroin, but it is potentially addictive. The total number of Americans with marijuana addiction is quite significant; about 2.7 million people in this country meet the criteria for marijuana addiction.

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# Opioid fact



According to the 2015 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, the majority of abused prescription drugs were obtained from family and friends, often from the home medicine cabinet. Safely dispose any unused/unwanted medication at local drop off locations or at a take back day event. For more information: <https://takebackday.dea.gov/>. Contact your local police department, hospital or pharmacy and ask if they have a prescription drop off box.

## VAPING UPDATE Illinois Youth Survey data shows the following:

Madison County 30 day e-cigarette use	2016	2018	% change
10th grade	19%	30%	58% increase
12th grade	21%	39%	86 % increase
St. Clair County 30 day e-cigarette use	2016	2018	% change
10th grade	11%	21%	91% increase
12th grade	19%	30%	58% increase

A recent study published in the journal of Pediatrics stated that teens who use e-cigarettes were up to 3 times more likely to use marijuana later than were students who hadn't tried e-cigs.<sup>5</sup>

# "COMMUNICATE"

WITH YOUTH ABOUT SUBSTANCE USE

When they approach you, MAKE TIME.

Talk about NOT using alcohol, nicotine, and other drugs.

Allow them to express ideas and/or concerns.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana/what-marijuana>
- <https://drugfree.org/parent-blog/we-havent-forgotten-about-marijuana-or-alcohol-neither-should-you/>
- <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/teachers>

- <https://drugfree.org/parent-blog/ways-marijuana-used-parents-guide/>
- <https://iys.cprd.illinois.edu/>
- Marijuana Talk Kit, [http://www.acpeds.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/3.2015-Marijuana\\_Talk\\_Kit.pdf](http://www.acpeds.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/3.2015-Marijuana_Talk_Kit.pdf)
- Hill, Kevin P. Marijuana: The unbiased truth about the world's most popular weed. Center City: Hazelden Publishing, 2015. Print.
- <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2018/08/02/peds.2017-3616.full>