

Effect of Marijuana Legalization on Youth

Marijuana is addictive... Studies have shown that about 1 in 6 youth who start smoking marijuana become addicted.⁵

Since the 1970s, the potency of flower marijuana has increased as much as tenfold from 3-4% for flower to as high as 30% today.⁶ The national average THC potency is 11.04% for flower and 55.45% for concentrates. Yet, in states that have commercialized adult-use marijuana, potency is even higher with THC levels reaching up to 98%.¹³



1/4 One out of four U.S. high school seniors would try marijuana or use it more often if it was legal.⁹



10% Past year use of marijuana among those ages 12 and older is **10% greater in these states that have legalized recreational use compared to states that have not.**¹⁰



34% Colorado saw an average 34% increase in regional poison control cases per year, with most pediatric exposures involving an edible product.¹¹

MARIJUANA CAN NEGATIVELY IMPACT THE BRAIN



IMPAIRED JUDGEMENT



MEMORY PROBLEMS

THC alters the way one processes information. It affects the *hippocampus* of the brain (the region responsible for information consolidation and spatial memory).¹²



COORDINATION

Short term effects of marijuana use can disturb coordination and distort perception (sights, sound, time, touch).¹²



MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Direct associations have been made between the use of marijuana and mental health issues like depression, anxiety, and addiction.

- In 2016, around 4 million people ages 12 and older had a marijuana use disorder.⁸ The most severe form is also known as an addiction.
- People who have taken large doses or used marijuana with high THC content may experience psychosis. Psychosis can affect the mind and make it hard for a person to understand what's real and what isn't.¹²

⁵ NIH. (2014, June). Principles of Adolescent Substance Use Disorder Treatment: A Research-Based Guide

⁷ Smart R, Caulkins JP, Kilmer B, Davenport S, Midgette G. Variation in cannabis potency and prices in a newly legal market: evidence from 30 million cannabis sales in Washington state.

⁹ Monitoring the Future. *National Adolescent Drug Trends in 2017*.

¹¹ Wang GS, Le Lait M, Deakyns SJ, Bronstein AC, Bajaj L, Roosevelt G. Unintentional Pediatric Exposures to Marijuana in Colorado, 2009-2015. *JAMA Pediatr.* 2016;170(9):e160971.

⁶ El Sohly, M.A., Mehmedic, Z., Foster, S., Gon, C., Chandra, S., & Church, J. C. (2016). Changes in Cannabis Potency Over the Last 2 Decades (1995-2014): Analysis of Current Data in the United States.

⁸ SAMHSA. (2017). Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health

¹⁰ SAMHSA (2017). National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Comparison of 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 Population Percentages.

¹² National Institute on Drug Abuse, drugabuse.gov. (June 2018).

¹³ Illinois Public Health Institute (Nov. 2018).

