

Helpful Questions

to Talk to Your Kids About Cannabis

What is cannabis?

What have you heard from friends?

Cannabis is the dried leaves, flowers, stems and seeds of the cannabis plant. It contains various compounds known as cannabinoids, including the psychoactive (mind-altering) chemical delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). This chemical causes the “high” experienced by users.

Why do you think people use cannabis?

People smoke and ingest cannabis for many reasons: for relief from medical conditions for fun, for a new experience, or to relax or cope with overwhelming emotions. Teens may experience peer pressure from their friends and feel they have to use marijuana to fit in.

Do you know the side effects of cannabis?

Short-term effects of cannabis include problems with memory and learning, distorted perception (sights, sounds, time, touch), trouble with thinking and problem-solving, loss of motor coordination, increased heart rate and anxiety. These effects are even greater when other drugs are taken with cannabis.

Do you know the long-term effects cannabis can have on young people?

- Difficulty controlling emotions
- Alters brain structure
- Lower IQ
- Cognitive problems, such as problems with attention, concentration, problem-solving, learning, and memory.
- Reduced coordination and reaction time.
- Performance issues at school or work.
- A greater likelihood of dropping out of school.
- Poor decision-making and judgement.
- Relationship problems.
- Overall lower life satisfaction.
- Increased risk of depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts.

Do you know how people use cannabis?

What have you heard?

Cannabis can be consumed in several ways; inhaled, ingested, or applied topically, and there are significant differences in the way the effects are felt.

Dried cannabis can be rolled into a cigarette, called a “joint” or in a cigar, called a “blunt”. It can be smoked in a water pipe or “bong” or vaped in an e-cigarette or other vaping devices.

Cannabis edibles can be brewed as tea, infused into drinks, or mixed into food and ingested as candies, cookies, and brownies. Consuming cannabis edibles like brownies or cookies is considered by some youth to be a less risky way of consuming than smoking it.

Cannabis extracts, which include oils and tinctures can also be ingested or inhaled in a pipe or bong and/or vaped with an e-cigarette or other vaping devices. Cannabis extracts can often have more concentrated levels of THC.

Do you know the signs and risks of someone becoming dependent or developing dependent behavior?

Some signs to watch for include:

- Negative behavior changes
- Abnormal health issues or sleep issues
- Using more and more to get the same effect
- Declining schoolwork or grades
- Worsening relationships with family



Medical Cannabis Program
mcp.doh.nm.gov

References:

- <https://www.drugfreekidscanada.org/talk/talkingcannabis/>
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