

# WHY TEENS SHOULDN'T USE MARIJUANA

## The Concern

- Marijuana use before age 18 increases likelihood of addiction
- Marijuana use in teens is associated with mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and psychosis
- Marijuana use impacts coordination and reaction time, which increases risk of car crashes and other injuries
- Marijuana use during adolescence changes the structure and function of the brain having long-term impacts
- Approximately 1 in 5 Montana high school students use marijuana, and of those, nearly half (42%) use it more than 10 times a month<sup>1</sup>

## The Consequences

### Short-Term

- Marijuana negatively impacts the ability to think clearly, problem solve, establish memories, and learn new info and skills
- Marijuana use in teens affects their ability to pay attention
- Teens who use marijuana are more likely to earn lower grades and drop out of school
- Marijuana use impairs coordination, reaction time, decision making ability, and concentration, increasing likelihood for car crashes and other injuries

### Long-Term

- Marijuana use during the teen years can damage the brain in long-lasting and even permanent ways
- Marijuana use in adolescence has been linked to memory problems in adulthood
- Marijuana use in adolescence has been connected to lower IQ scores in adulthood
- Marijuana use leading to school dropout rates has the long-term consequences of lower academic achievements and graduation rates, overall



## The Key Role of Parents and Those in a Parenting Role in Preventing Teen Marijuana Use

Youth who learn about the risks of drug use from their parents are less likely to use drugs than those who don't.

### Talk and Listen

- Have frequent conversations about marijuana, peer pressure, and making healthy decisions
- Equip your teen with refusal strategies
- Avoid sending mixed messages about marijuana
- Be clear about what is legal, including medical use

### Establish Clear Rules

- Develop rules with your teen
- Set clear consequences for violations of the rules
- Develop clear expectations about the behaviors you are seeking
- Catch your teen doing things right

### Model Positive Behaviors

- Talk with your teen about current affairs, moral dilemmas, addiction, and crime
- Take responsibility for your actions; avoid blaming others
- Talk openly about your values
- Don't just say "No"; include your rationale to help your teen understand your values and decision making
- Model healthy ways to handle stress
- Never drive after using marijuana or drinking alcohol

### Monitor

- Know where your child is at all times
- Know if your teen's friends use marijuana
- If you have alcohol or marijuana in the home, store it securely

### Clarify Misperceptions

- Explain that most of their peers do not use marijuana
- Avoid arguing about it; rather gather information together

1. Montana Office of Public Instruction (n.d.). *2019 Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey: High school results*. Helena, MT: Author. Retrieved from [https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/YRBS/2019YRBS/2019\\_MT\\_YRBS\\_FullReport.pdf](https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/YRBS/2019YRBS/2019_MT_YRBS_FullReport.pdf)



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