

TALKING TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT MARIJUANA

A TIP SHEET FOR PARENTS

Think before you speak

Having conversations with your kids about marijuana is worth the effort. But it's good to prepare. Consider beforehand how you'll bring up the topic and what you'll say. The information below can help you.

The Basics

- Marijuana can be used in lots of ways
- Smoked
 - in hand-rolled cigarettes (joints), in emptied cigars that have been refilled with pot (blunts), in pipes, in water pipes (bongs)
- Vaped
- Mixed with food (edibles)
 - brownies, cookies, candy, brewed as tea
- Marijuana is made of dozens of compounds, including tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD). THC is what makes people feel "high." CBD can make people feel relaxed.
- Dabs are high-concentration THC resins that are typically smoked. Various forms include hash oil or honey oil (gooey liquids), wax or budder (soft solids with a texture like lip balm) and shatter (hard, amber-colored solids).

FAQs

These are some common questions teens might ask about the subject and ideas for how to respond. Your kids want you to be genuine. So don't memorize the answers—just talk to them heart-to-heart. Remember, too, your teens may ask different questions. Think about your kids' own personalities and what they may wonder, and then use that to guide your conversation.

"How can marijuana be so dangerous if it's a 'natural' substance?"

Lots of things could be called "natural" because they come from the ground, not a laboratory. But that doesn't mean they're not bad for you. Tobacco could be considered "natural." But smoking is the leading cause of preventable death. Doctors don't even agree about the effectiveness and safety of medical marijuana.

*www.samhsa.gov, www.drugabuse.gov,
www.ncsl.org, www.cdc.gov

The Facts

- It's estimated 1.2 million teens aged 12-17 tried marijuana for the first time in 2017. That's approximately 3,300 kids each day.
- About half of kids between 12 and 17 say it would be easy to get marijuana if they wanted some.
- People who begin using marijuana before age 18 are four to seven times more likely to develop a marijuana use disorder than adults.
- Marijuana laws vary from state to state, but all states ban recreational use for minors.

"Don't experts say marijuana isn't addictive?"

That's what some people say. But the CDC says one in 10 marijuana users will become addicted, and that the possibility rises to one in six if you start using before 18 years old.⁶ While there's some controversy over the word "addictive" most experts agree you can become dependent on marijuana—meaning you experience withdrawal symptoms when you're not taking it.

"If marijuana is legal in my state, why can't I use it?"

Recreational use is only legal for people 21 and older. For people younger than 21, it's against the law because marijuana can affect your development—mentally and physically.