The Facts

About Teenage Marijuana Use

Santa Clara Valley Health and Hospital System
Department of Alcohol and Drugs (DADS)
Prevention Division
The Work of DADS

Santa Clara County DADS is focused on the prevention of substance abuse problems in the community.

DADS takes on the responsibility of educating children, parents, families, and communities on the facts behind substance abuse causes, symptoms, and outcomes.
The Work of DADS

DADS provides factual information to youth, parents, and communities about the effects of marijuana use, as well as ideas for prevention and/or treatment.
The Work of DADS

DADS will provide research findings and consultation to government officials and other agencies and organizations.

The goal of this support is to provide current and relevant information to those who make policy decisions that affect the whole community.
Teen Marijuana Use

Research has consistently shown that the less risky a child believes a drug to be, the more likely s/he will use it.
Teen Marijuana Use

Marijuana Perceived Risk vs. Past Year Use by 12th Graders

SOURCE: University of Michigan, 2013 Monitoring the Future Study
# Teen Marijuana Use

## Past-Year Use of Various Drugs by 12th Graders (Percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marijuana/Hashish</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthetic Marijuana</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adderall</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicodin</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cough Medicine</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tranquilizers</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hallucinogens</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedatives*</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvia</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OxyContin</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDMA (Ecstasy)</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhalants</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocaine (any form)</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritalin</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is a body of research which demonstrates that the availability of substances to youth contributes to the likelihood that they will use.
Marijuana use over the past decade has continued its upward trend among 8th, 10th, and 12th graders.
More than 60% of high school seniors report that they don’t view regular marijuana use as harmful to them.
Teen Marijuana Use

• 45% of U.S. 12th graders reported having used marijuana once or more in their lifetime, with 23% reporting use in the previous 30 days.

• 1 in every 15 high school seniors (6.5%) is a daily or near daily marijuana user.
Teen Marijuana Use

Could your chronic marijuana use be lowering your IQ?

1 in 6 youth who use marijuana will become addicted, and with regular use, may suffer the permanent IQ loss of 6-8 points.
Of the 12th graders who say that they have used marijuana in the past year and who live in states that have marijuana use laws, 1/3 say that one of their sources of marijuana is another person's medical marijuana “recommendation”. And 6% say they get it from their own “recommendation”.
Growing a Grown-up Brain

Scientists have long thought that the human brain was formed in early childhood. But by scanning children’s brains with an MRI year after year, they discovered that the brain undergoes radical changes in adolescence. Excess gray matter is pruned out, making brain connections more specialized and efficient. The parts of the brain that control physical movement, vision, and the senses mature first, while the regions in the front that control higher thinking don’t finish the pruning process until the early 20s.

Gray matter: Nerve cell bodies and fibers that make up the bulk of the brain’s computing power.

Parietal lobe: Spatial perception

Occipital lobe: Vision

Temporal lobe: Memory, hearing, language

Frontal lobe: Planning, emotional control, problem solving

Teen Marijuana Use

Teens who were heavy marijuana users -- smoking it daily for about three years -- had abnormal changes in their brain structures related to working memory and performed poorly on memory tasks.

The younger youth were when they started using marijuana heavily, the more abnormally their brain regions were shaped.
Teen Marijuana Use

If you were wondering about the effects of smoking marijuana on the developing brain of a teenager, perhaps this brain scan will help you understand. The deterioration is obvious by the "hole" produced by a three year history of 4 times a week of smoking marijuana. The result is decreased prefrontal cortex activity. The prefrontal cortex is the brain region implicated in planning complex cognitive behavior, personality expression, decision making and moderating social behavior. The basic activity of this brain region is considered to be orchestration of thoughts and actions in accordance with internal goals (from Wikipedia).

For a growing and developing brain, synapses, new connections and "brain circuitry" is being established and formalized for life. Marijuana and alcohol use impair these connections and development. These scans show what is happening to a normal brain and one of a marijuana user. A report by the Director of NIDA, the National Institute of Drug Abuse study from the National Institute of Drug Abuse reported the following from January 2013 study. "The message inherent in these and multiple studies is clear: Regular marijuana use in adolescence is part of a cluster of behaviors that can produce enduring detrimental effects and alter the trajectory of a young person's life--thwarting his or her potential. Beyond potentially lowering IQ, teen marijuana use is linked to school dropout, other drug use and mental health problems."  Given the current number of regular marijuana users (about 1-15 high school seniors) and the possibility of this number increasing with marijuana legalization, we cannot afford to divert our focus from the central point. Regular marijuana use stands to jeopardize a young person's changes of success--in school and life."

Source: http://klaybor.blogspot.com/2013_04_01_archive.html
Numerous studies have found a link between teen marijuana use and psychosis or schizophrenia.
A 2012 study found that increasing frequency of marijuana use was associated with increasing symptoms of depression, especially in adolescents.
According to a Columbia University School of Public Health report, fatal crashes involving marijuana use tripled during the previous decade.
Teen Marijuana Use

Youth that smoke marijuana every weekend for two years are almost six times more likely to drop out of high school than nonsmokers, more than three times less likely to enter college than nonsmokers, and more than four times less likely to earn a college degree.
**Teen Marijuana Use**

**Signs That A Teen May Be Using Marijuana**

1. If the teen seems confused, slow and lethargic, they may be high.
2. The teen can have red, bloodshot eyes.
3. The teen could be very giggly or very tired,
4. The teen may be paranoid or filled with anxiety.
5. The teen may get the 'munchies' and be hungry for any food they can get their hands on.
6. The youth can have a hard time remembering things that just happened.
7. If you find a bottle of eye drops while doing the laundry, there may be cause for concern.
   Healthy teens do not often need eye strain medication, red eyed marijuana smokers concealing use do.
8. Rolling papers, pipes, a bong, roach clips etc. Drug paraphernalia is a pretty good indicator of a problem, and once teens acquire drug taking accessories, you can be sure they’ve passed the initial experimentation stage of use. They are not holding these things for friends.
9. Incense, Mouth wash, Air Fresheners etc. A lot of teens will attempt to cover up the smell of marijuana smoke. Incense in the bedroom or a smell on the clothes can be a warning sign of drug use.
10. Marijuana stickers or posters. A lot of teens like to advertise their usage and do so through stickers, pins on school bags and books, or through posters in the bedroom. The code 420 always refers to marijuana smoking, and you can often see 420 stickers on teen school bags.
Teen Marijuana Use

Studies show that one of the most critical influences on kids’ decisions about taking drugs is the input of parents. In fact, kids who say they learn a lot about the risks of drugs at home are up to 50% less likely to use drugs.

There are many steps you can take in preventing teen drug use. Help your teen stay safe and make healthy decisions by:

• Keeping the lines of communication open
  • Setting clear limits
• Being directly involved in his or her everyday world.

It’s important to talk often, listen regularly, and communicate clearly that you do not want your teen using drugs. Encourage your teen to spend time with positive role models, including peers, family members or other influential adults. These key influencers can help your teen avoid the dangers of drugs and reinforce the benefits of healthy, drug-free living.
Teen Marijuana Use

Ways To Avoid Marijuana Pressure From Peers

1. Just say no - in some situations, just saying no without a lot of arguing and explaining is the best response. Just make sure your “no” is a strong and determined one.
2. Give a reason why it’s a bad idea.
3. Make a joke - humor is a great way to change the topic and the mood. It can take the attention away from you.
4. Make an excuse why you can’t.
5. Suggest a different activity - by thinking of something better to do, you’re offering everyone an “out.” You just might be surprised who might take you up on it.
6. Leave the situation - if you think the others are going to do something you don’t want to be involved in, just leave. You can make up an excuse, or you can say nothing at all. If you lead the way, others may follow.
7. The power of numbers - talk to your closest friends about how you feel. Then you can support each other. Agree up front that we will stick together.
Teen Marijuana Use

Ways To Avoid Marijuana Pressure From Peers

"I can't. I get tested every month at my job."

"No thanks. I've got asthma. Getting baked would probably kill me."

"No way! My mom would smell it on me a mile away!"

"I'd better not. I'm training for soccer season."

"No thanks. I'm already high just being here."

"Hey, if I get toasted, who's gonna drive us home?"

“I can’t, I get sick when I blaze”

“I’m not into that.”

“I don’t want to get kicked off of the _____ team.”

“I have practice today.”

“I have to take care of my little sister.”

“I always get caught....if I go with you we’ll all get in trouble!”
For More Information:
Youth
http://www.justthinktwice.com/stumbleweed/home.html
Parents
http://teenbrain.drugfree.org/
General Information
http://www.voicesunited.net/