

# KEEP YOUR KIDS

DRUG

ALCOHOL

THC

NICOTINE

JUUL®

LIQUOR

METH

VAPE

MARIJUANA

BOOZE

TOBACCO

POT

SUBSTANCE

# FREE

## MARIJUANA

THC has lifelong negative effects on brain development.

### Know the Risks

While some U.S. states have legalized medical and/or recreational use of marijuana, NO state allows minors to purchase or use marijuana or THC-containing products. It can be smoked or vaped (in an e-cigarette or vape mod). THC, the chemical in marijuana that gives a "high," can also be found in some products like candy and soft drinks. Chronic use can lead to dependence, and THC affects brain cells related to learning, memory, coordination and addiction. This is an even greater danger in those under 25, whose brains are still developing. Chronic marijuana use has been linked with depression, anxiety and an increased risk of schizophrenia.

### Know the Facts

- **Although there are significant risks** to young people, significant numbers are using. In our region, almost **15% of 10th graders and 26% of 12th graders** have tried marijuana. **Almost 12% of 12th graders report using it regularly** (at least once in 30 days).
- Kids are starting at **younger ages** in our region. **Almost 6% of 8th graders** have already tried marijuana.
- **Marijuana can be easier to obtain than alcohol**, according to recent surveys of young people.
- **Parents' attitudes matter.** In our region, about **10% of 12th graders** report that their parents "don't see smoking marijuana as wrong or very wrong" in recent surveys.
- Youth report the top reasons to use are **to fit in, to self-medicate and to reduce anxiety** or cope with feelings of **depression**. Rural youth report that boredom also plays a part in the choice to use marijuana.
- **Signs of use** include bloodshot eyes, unsteadiness, unusual silliness and laughter, tiredness and use of incense, scented candles or room sprays.

### Focus on Prevention

With marijuana use, sharing the facts and dispelling misconceptions ("But it's legal in some places!") is the best first step. While adult opinions may vary about marijuana, your kids need to know this is still an illegal substance, and one that can permanently affect their brain development. Be open and supportive as you have conversation about the topic, but make sure they understand your expectations clearly. Talk about self-confidence, fitting in with friends and how anxiety or depression might impact their choice. If they are having feelings of depression or anxiety, reassure them that there are ways to address those and consider discussing this with your family doctor.



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