



# Marijuana Use and Youth...

## What you need to know

Attitudes toward marijuana use are changing. Recent legalization of adult marijuana use by Washington State voters shows this. This publication provides science-based information on youth marijuana use.

### Marijuana Today

Marijuana comes in many forms—joints (cigarettes), pills, and can be mixed into foods or drinks. Marijuana comes from the cannabis plant and can be smoked, eaten, or vaporized.

### Brain Development

The youth brain is under constant construction. This is part of normal development.

- Regular use of marijuana while the brain is under construction increases the risk of negatively altering the brain's chemical makeup. This is what leads to addiction, which is when the drug is needed to "feel okay".

### Education & Learning

Memory, attention, and learning are negatively impacted by marijuana use. Research has shown a drop in IQ for youth who regularly use marijuana.

### Well-Being

Youth marijuana use negatively impacts healthy child development.

- Marijuana use impacts the emotional well-being and mental health of youth. Marijuana use can make depression worse.
- Youth that use marijuana to feel better or cope with difficult emotions, risk not learning how to manage their emotions without the drug.

## Injury

Marijuana use impairs safe driving skills such as tracking, attention, reaction time, and distance perception. Youth who drive under the influence of marijuana are at increased risk for injury or death.

## Access to Marijuana

Youth who use drugs often get them from family, friends and the homes of people they know. With medical marijuana and adult recreational use of marijuana being legal, limit youth access to marijuana. Set clear rules for youth about all drug use.

## Legal Risks

Non-medical marijuana use is NOT legal for anyone under the age of 21 in Washington State. Legal consequences range from misdemeanor charges for possession to felony charges for distribution of marijuana. Financial consequences for youth found illegally involved with marijuana can include court fines, fees to get a driver license back, higher car insurance rates and losing certain jobs or college loans.

## Information & Resources

**For more information on any of these topics go to:**

[www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/sscd/marijuana.html](http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/sscd/marijuana.html)

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Call (360) 867-2509 or e-mail [GehrigT@co.thurston.wa.us](mailto:GehrigT@co.thurston.wa.us) to get on the listserve.

**Youth Drug and Alcohol Treatment:** [www.countycd.org](http://www.countycd.org)

**The Crisis Clinic:** Offers 24/7 phone support, and resources.

[www.Crisis-Clinic.org](http://www.Crisis-Clinic.org)

Crisis line: (360) 586-2800

Youth help line: (360) 586-2777

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