

Questions I'm Most Frequently Asked About Marijuana

By Laura Stack, Founder & CEO, Johnny's Ambassadors



1. What is dabbing?

Inhaling the vapors from a heated marijuana concentrate such as wax, shatter, or crystalline.

2. Define a cannabinoid.

Cannabinoids are chemicals that occur in the cannabis plant. There are over 80 cannabinoids. Our bodies also produce natural cannabinoids called anandamide and 2-arachidonoylglycerol (2-AG).

3. What is the difference between THC and CBD?

THC, or delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol, is the psychoactive cannabinoid in marijuana; CBD or cannabidiol is the 2nd most common cannabinoid in the cannabis plant, and it can't get you high and is possibly a protective factor to balance the THC.

4. How does marijuana make a user "high"?

The THC molecule is similar to the body's natural endocannabinoid (anandamide). THC enters the bloodstream and binds to CB1 (cannabinoid 1) and CB2 (cannabinoid 2) receptors throughout the brain and body and "tricks" the system into thinking it's the real thing, thereby blocking the real thing.

5. What is the difference between cannabis and marijuana and hemp?

Cannabis is a genus of plant; marijuana is a species of cannabis that has greater than .03% THC; hemp is a species of cannabis that has less than .03% THC (delta 9). Delta 8, 9, and 10 can be derived from either marijuana or hemp.

6. What is the Endocannabinoid System (ECS)?

The endocannabinoid system (ECS) is a complex cell-signaling system that plays role in regulating a range of functions and processes, including sleep, mood, appetite, memory, reproduction, and fertility. The ECS exists and is active in your body even if you don't use cannabis, but it is negatively impacted when it interacts with THC.

7. What's the difference between flower and concentrate?

Flower is the plant or herb part of the plant ("weed" or "grass"), while concentrates have all plant matter removed through solvents and laboratory processes, so that just the THC remains (the plant matter is discarded). Concentrates are chemicals, not plants, and there is nothing "natural" about them.

8. What does potency mean?

Potency refers to the percentage of THC present in the particular marijuana product (e.g., 28% in flower or 80% in dabs).

9. How many different ways can a user consume marijuana (what products)?

The number of marijuana products available today is staggering! They include flower, concentrates, edibles such as candy and bakery goods, vape/oil, tinctures (flavoring people put on or in food), tampons, suppositories, inhalants, drinks, and more.

10. How has marijuana changed since “Woodstock days” in the 70s, 80s, and 90s?

Until the 90s, marijuana averaged between 2-5% THC. Today, due to cultivation for higher and higher levels of THC and lower amounts of CBD, it's impossible to find marijuana flower in a dispensary lower than 10%, and many near 30% THC (a hard drug is anything over 10% THC). Concentrates weren't commercialized until after 2010 and range from 60% to 99% potency.

11. At what age does the brain's frontal lobe, responsible for risk vs. reward decision making, fully develop?

Most scientists believe the female brain finishes forming at 25, and the male brain can continue formation until 28 or 30.

12. How does marijuana affect the development of the human brain?

The brain forms back to front and bottom to top. THC in the developing brain disrupts its normal development of Synaptogenesis (formation of synapse between neurons in the nervous system); Apoptosis (the controlled pruning of cells as a normal part of growth to allow specialization); and Myelination (the formation of sheaths around pathways to increase efficiency of transmission). MRIs show the cortices of youth who use marijuana before this process is complete have more thinning, meaning parts were pruned they might have wanted to keep.

13. Do you know the significance of 420 Day and 710 Day?

420 Day is a holiday celebrating marijuana. Users smoke marijuana at 4:20 PM on April 20. 710 Day is a holiday celebrating concentrates (on a calculator, 710 spells “OIL” when held upside down). Users dab at 7:10 PM on July 10.

14. What age should you begin educating your child about drugs?

As early as possible, in an age-appropriate fashion, starting at 5 years old, adding more information at 10, 13, 16, 18, and always.

15. What are three (of the 12 mentioned) ways marijuana harms adolescents?

Marijuana dependence, decreased IQ, increased risk of addiction with higher potency, increased odds of using other drugs, death from throwing up, more likely to drop out of school, possible psychosis and schizophrenia, decreased fertility rate, lower motivation to do things, possible paranoid and thoughts that others intend to harm you, health damages, poor driving skills.

16. Name five potential negative health implications if your child uses marijuana.

Addiction, brain health, increased heart rate, mental illness, poisoning (especially ingesting edibles), increased risk of stroke and heart disease, Heavy cough, chemicals and tar that raise concerns about risk for cancer and lung disease, large airway inflammation, increased airway resistance, lung hyperinflation, chronic bronchitis, respiratory problems, reduction of respiratory system's immune response, leading to lung infections such as pneumonia, EVALI leading to death, to name some.

17. At what age can a teen obtain a medical marijuana card in Colorado?

18 years old (by making up a non-specific diagnosis such as a migraine).

18. Is parental approval required to obtain a medical marijuana card if the child is under 21?

No! Anyone between 18-21 can legally buy shatter in CO from a medical marijuana dispensary with a medical marijuana card, even though they aren't old enough buy recreationally at 21.

19. What is the #1 cause of death for youths aged 10-19 in Colorado?

Suicide. In 2018, over 36% of suicides in youth ages 15-19 had THC in their toxicology reports.

20. Research shows that use of marijuana with a THC content over 10% increases the risk of suicide by what percentage and a psychotic disorder by what percentage?

Using marijuana over 10% increases risk of suicide by 7-fold and risk of developing a psychotic disorder by 5-fold.

21. What two documents should parents have in place before their child leaves for college, so they can have greater control over their child's medical decisions?

HIPPA and POA (Power of Attorney)