

# Teen Brain Development

“Adult use” marijuana is illegal for youth under 21, because your brain is still forming. The human brain continues to grow until age 25 for females and up to age 30 for males. Anything that interferes with brain programming can lead to cognitive, emotional, and mental health problems.

Some teens believe regular cannabis use isn't harmful to their mental health or think, “It won't happen to me.” Nothing could be farther from the truth!

In one study, researchers did MRI scans on the brains of 799 youth at age 14 and 19. The more these teens used marijuana, the thinner their prefrontal cortex became. Without all your brain power available, your ability to make decisions when you get older will be impacted.

Researchers also found heavy marijuana use as an adolescent predicts an 8-point drop in IQ! So if you are an A student, that is a C. If you are a C student, that is an F.

When your brain doesn't form correctly, you won't have all the brain power you would have had to make good decisions as an adult, and your career opportunities could be limited.

**QUESTION:** How comfortable are you knowing that using marijuana is literally causing damage to your brain (brain damage)?

**REFLECT**

Research links: [jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/fullarticle/2781289](http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/fullarticle/2781289) and [www.pnas.org/content/109/40/E2657](http://www.pnas.org/content/109/40/E2657)

