JohnnysAmbassadors.org

Educating Communities About the Dangers of Youth THC Use



YOUTH THC PREVENTION
JOHNNY'S AMBASSADORS

Distributed by
Johnny's Ambassadors
Youth THC
Prevention Nonprofit

HOW DOES THC IMPACT BRAIN DEVELOPMENT IN TEENS?

Even with 1-2 uses, THC use in teens causes changes in brain development and function. Talk to your teens about the impact of THC on their brain!

BRAIN PART, FUNCTION, AND THC IMPACT:

1. Prefrontal cortex
Executive function and higher reasoning
Increases impulsiveness and reduces judgment

2. Nucleus accumbens
The reward circuit
Increases euphoria

3. Amygdala
Emotions, fear, anxiety
Increases paranoia, panic

4. Hippocampus
Learning new information
Impairs memory

5. Orbitofrontal cortex
Motivation and drive
Decreases desire to do things

6. Basal ganglia
Planning and starting movement
Slows reaction time

7. Cerebellum
Motor skills, balance
Impairs coordination

8. Hypothalamus
Eating, sex drive
Increases appetite

9. Neocortex
Feeling and movement
Alters sensations



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Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome

CHS or "Scromiting"

The term combines "vomiting" and "screaming." You may have intense pain, which causes you to scream while you vomit.

Cannabis hyperemesis syndrome (CHS) is a condition that leads to frequent and severe nausea and vomiting, or scromiting. It can occur with any THC use, and most frequently in daily, long-term users of high potency THC products.

CHS Symptoms:

- Abdominal pain
- Persistent nausea
- Severe vomiting or scromiting
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Dehydration

> *"After heavy THC use for two years, my son started with extreme stomach pain. Then, vomiting, mostly in the morning. When he stopped using THC, it went away within a few days. The next time he started using, it came on much faster and was more intense."*

CHS Causes: Using high potency THC products at least once a day can result in CHS. Although the exact cause of CHS is unknown, scientists believe long-term overstimulation of endocannabinoid system receptors may undermine the body's natural control of nausea and vomiting.

CHS Outcomes: Complications from CHS can include dehydration, electrolyte imbalance, malnutrition, weight loss, tooth decay, seizures, abnormal heart rhythm, kidney failure, and even swelling of the brain.

CHS Diagnosis: There is no test to confirm a diagnosis of CHS. Symptoms used to diagnose it include chronic high-potency THC use, abdominal pain, and scromiting. Taking long, hot showers or baths in order to get relief from the vomiting and abdominal pain is a strong indicator of CHS.

CHS Treatment: Treatment for CHS involves stopping THC use completely. Although symptoms may persist for a few weeks, they will eventually disappear, with most people feeling relief within 10 days.

CHS Prevention: The only proven way to prevent CHS is to stop using all THC products.

"Although the exact number of people with CHS is unknown, based on emergency department surveys, CHS is estimated to affect about 2.75 million people in the US yearly. From 2017 to 2021, emergency department visits for CHS doubled in the US and Canada and were most common among males aged 16 to 34 years."*

If you use any kind of product containing THC and have persistent vomiting, TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR.

nida.nih.gov/research-topics/cannabis-marijuana
pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/39115834/
jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2824833 *

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NEGATIVE EFFECTS of THC Use in Teens



Can Cause Paranoia and Suspicion

Can Cause Violent and Aggressive Behavior

Can Kill You From Throwing Up

Damages Lung Health

Decreases IQ

Lowers Your Motivation To Do Things

Increases Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors

Increases Heart Rate and Blood Pressure

Reduces Short- and Long-Term Memory

Causes Increased Anxiety and Depression

Can Result In Cannabis-Induced Psychosis and Schizophrenia

Changes Brain Formation

THC is the chemical in cannabis that makes users feel high. It is never safe or harmless for teen use. The brain forms until age 25 for young women and up to 30 for young men. There is NO safe level of THC in the developing adolescent brain and body. Talk to a trusted adult if you are concerned about your THC use.

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www.cdc.gov/cannabis/health-effects/cannabis-and-teens.html

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HOW DO YOU KNOW YOUR TEEN IS USING THC?

Possible signs of THC use (cannabis, marijuana, vapes, dabs, edibles):



- Increased social isolation
- Doing poorly in school
- Changes in friend group
- Bloodshot or squinty eyes
- Depressed or anxious
- Paranoid, suspicious, or delusional
- Sleeping all the time
- Not eating right
- Binging on junk food
- Angry and defensive
- Not participating in family activities
- Apathetic or unmotivated
- Missing kitchen lighters
- Fruity smell of vapes
- Musky smell of marijuana
- Being sneaky and secretive
- Hanging out with sketchy people

Talk to your teen about the harms of THC. Seek help if your teen is using—don't try to fix it yourself. Go to JohnnysAmbassadors.org/parents for help and JohnnysAmbassadors.org/treatment for centers.

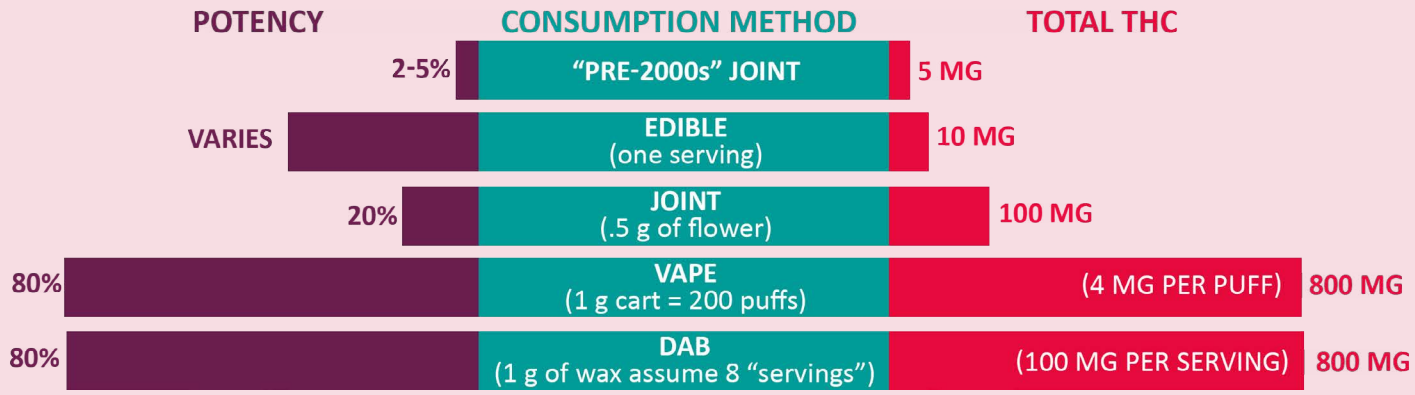
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How STRONG Are Today's High Potency THC Products

The marijuana plant in the 1960s averaged 1% THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol, the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana). In 2025, the average THC content in dispensary marijuana is 20%, and some strains hit 40%. THC concentrates and extracts, such as wax, oil, and shatter, average 60% in a dispensary, and some distillates and crystals can reach nearly 100% pure THC.

Today's high potency THC products resemble nothing like the plants of yesteryear everyone touts as "medical." Marijuana might start as a plant, but today's concentrated products are created in a lab, and there's nothing natural about them! If you smoked an entire joint by yourself in the 1980s, you might get 5mg of THC total. If you take a dab today, it can be 250mg, or the equivalent of 50 joints!



Johnny's Ambassadors Scientific Advisory Board defines any marijuana flower or THC product over 10% as high potency. ALL marijuana products today, whether flower, dabs, vapes, or edibles are HIGH POTENCY and UNSAFE for youth. There are NO studies that indicate any of today's high potency THC products sold in a dispensary are healthy for the developing teen brain. Cannabis Use Disorder (CUD) is dose dependent, meaning the more you use, the easier it is to get addicted. Nearly 45% of all youth who use THC products will develop problematic use.*

EDUCATE YOUR TEENS ABOUT THE HARMS OF TODAY'S POTENT MARIJUANA AND HIGH POTENCY THC PRODUCTS.

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* SAMHSA.org

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IS IT NORMAL TEEN BEHAVIOR OR CANNABIS WITHDRAWAL SYNDROME?

Is your child acting differently than he or she did just a few weeks ago? Is it normal teen angst, or could your child be suffering the effects of Cannabis Withdrawal Syndrome (CWS)?

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) specifies six basic types of mental illness marijuana could either contribute to or trigger:

1. Affective disorders of thought and feeling, including bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, and depression
2. Schizophrenia
3. Amotivational syndrome
4. Disruptive cognitive function
5. Neuropsychological decline
6. Psychotic disorders

When they can't get the drug, those who are addicted or dependent suffer from Cannabis Withdrawal Syndrome (CWS), defined as:

- Nervousness or anxiety
- Hostility (irritability, anger, or aggression)
- Sleep difficulty
- Depressed mood
- Restlessness
- Decreased appetite or weight loss
- Physical symptoms, including headaches, shakiness/tremors, sweating, abdominal pain, chills, and fever



Since there is considerable overlap between symptoms of cannabis withdrawal and depression and anxiety, talk to your child's doctor about screening them for THC if they seem depressed or anxious. Given the increase in public beliefs that THC is an effective treatment for depression—although evidence currently suggests otherwise—your teen may be trying to self-medicate and unintentionally perpetuating cannabis withdrawal.

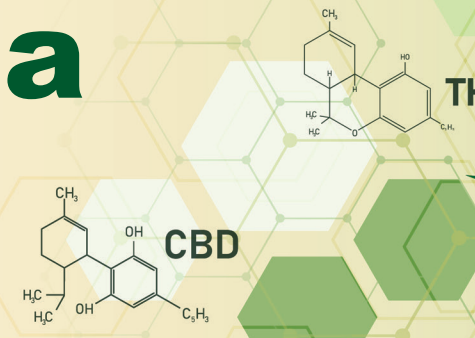
pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6359953/

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Marijuana Versus Hemp



(Delta-9-THC vs. Delta-8-THC)

What's the Difference?

Cannabis is a genus of flowering plant. Cannabis has hundreds of species or strains. Some cannabis plants are classified as marijuana, which are drug varieties. Some cannabis plants are classified as hemp, which are not drug varieties.

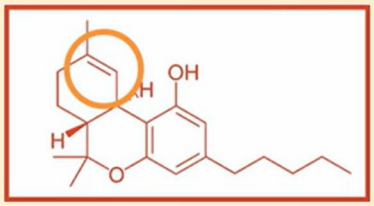
How do you know if it's marijuana or hemp? Botanically, marijuana plants contain greater than .3% Delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (Delta-9-THC), the chemical, or cannabinoid, in the plant that makes users high. Hemp contains less than .3% Delta-9-THC. Marijuana plants (and its derivative Delta-9-THC products such as vapes, dabs, and edibles) are legal for recreational use in 25 states. Hemp plants, however, are legal in ALL 50 states under the Farm Bill of 2018, because they contain very little Delta-9-THC and are considered an industrial plant.

Unfortunately, the Farm Bill accidentally legalized THC nationwide. The authors left out a very important rule you can't make psychoactive products or THC isomers out of hemp. You see, marijuana and hemp plants also contain another chemical called cannabidiol (CBD), which on its own doesn't make you high. But in a lab, you can take hemp (legal), extract the CBD, and run it through a process called isomerization (loophole). If you close a carbon chain and move a double bond in CBD, you can convert it to Delta-8-THC.

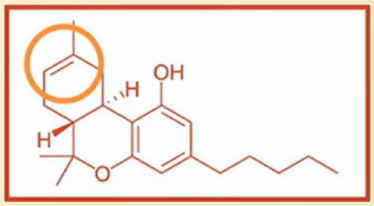
Delta-8-THC binds with the same CB1 (cannabinoid-1) receptors in the brain as Delta-9-THC, so it is psychoactive. Delta-8-THC is one of approximately 100 cannabinoids that exist in miniscule amounts in marijuana, but you can create it in unlimited amounts in a lab from CBD extracted from hemp.

This loophole has allowed the addiction-for-profit industry to fly under the radar and flood the market with all sorts of psychoactive products containing THC, such as Delta-10-THC, Delta-11-THC, THC-A, THC-O, THC-P, etc. These various products all have different potencies, but THC is THC is THC, and it will make you high. Yes, Delta-8-THC may be weaker than Delta-9-THC, but teens just take more. Delta-8 products impact your brain in the same way marijuana does, regardless of what plant they were made from.

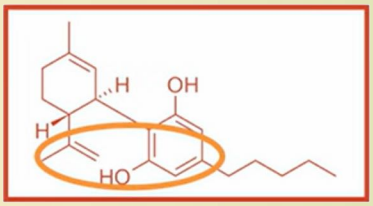
DELTA-9 THC



DELTA-8 THC

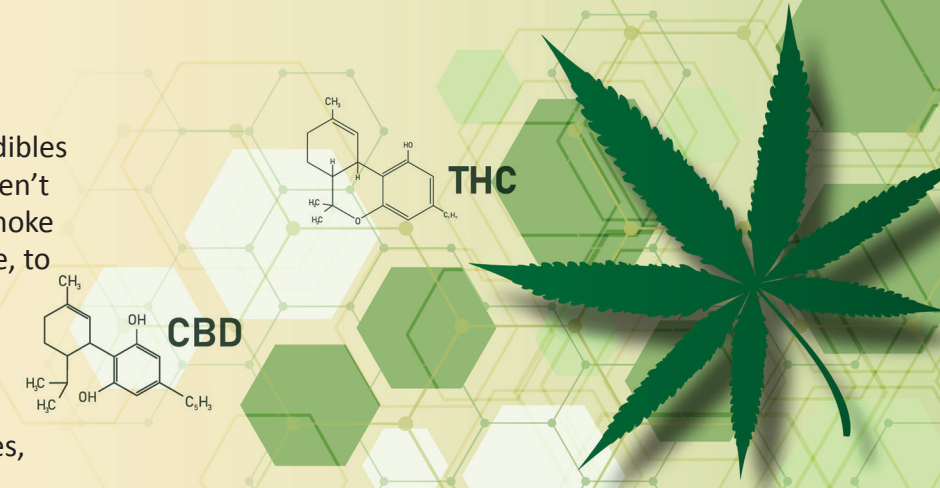


CBD



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Sadly, Delta-8 vapes, candies, drinks, and edibles can be purchased (in states where they haven't been banned) in CBD shops, vape shops, smoke shops, gas stations, dollar stores, and online, to name a few outlets.

Delta-8-THC products can be even worse in many ways, since they are synthetic and lab-derived with harmful chemical processes, solvents, and additives. Delta-8-THC and CBD products are completely unregulated with no health benefits approved by the FDA. In fact, the FDA has warned against their use, saying, "Delta-8-THC has serious health risks" and "may be marketed in a way that puts the public health at risk."

Lab tests often show these Delta-8 products aren't labeled correctly. They can contain much higher amounts of Delta-9-THC than they are legally supposed to. Many of the ingredients aren't listed because they are poisonous chemical byproducts.

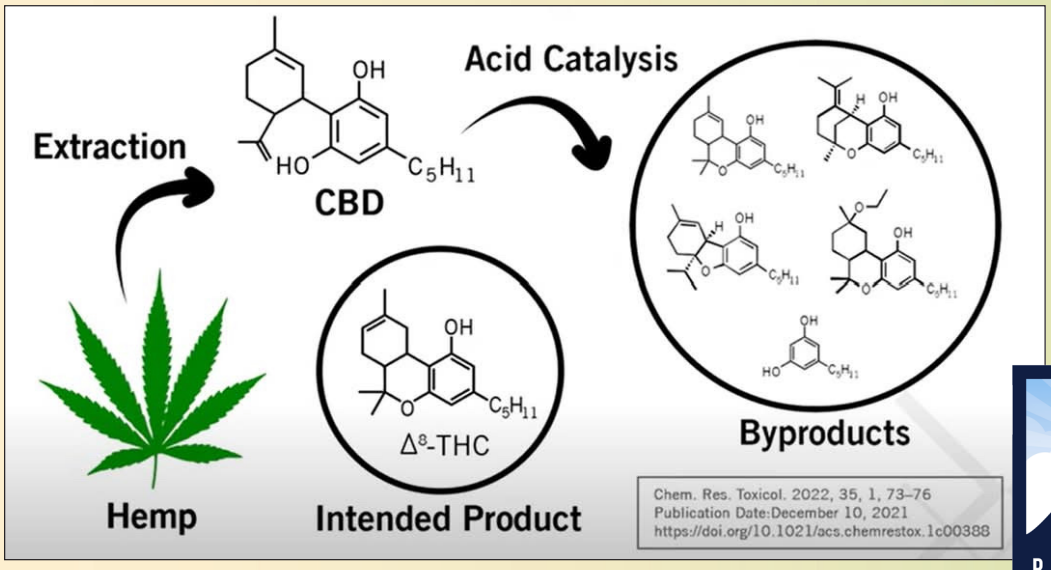
The human brain continues to form up to age 30, so adolescent use of THC of any kind can lead to changes in the brain. Teen use of any THC product can lead to Cannabis-Induced Psychosis, schizophrenia, anxiety, depression, bipolar, hallucinations, paranoia, poisoning, overdose, severe vomiting (cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome or CHS), suspiciousness, and suicidality, to name just a few negative outcomes.

There are NO studies showing ANY benefit to young people who use today's high potency THC products!

There are NO Delta-8-THC, CBD, or Delta-9-THC dispensary drugs approved by the FDA as "medicine." Medicine is prescribed by a doctor and fulfilled at a pharmacy, not "recommended" by a cannabis doctor and bought in a dispensary.

Warn your children about the harms of all THC, regardless of what plant it comes from, how it was made, or its final form.

Talk to your doctor if you are concerned about your child's use of THC.



www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/5-things-know-about-delta-8-tetrahydrocannabinol-delta-8-thc

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TALK TO YOUR TEEN ABOUT THC



"I'd like to talk to you about THC."

THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) is the chemical in marijuana products (natural or synthetic) that makes users high (weed, vapes, dabs, edibles). THC is particularly harmful for teens, so talk to them early and often about abstinence. Here are some talking points:

- THC is legal for adults in some states but that doesn't make it legal or safe for teens.
- THC is particularly harmful for the adolescent brain and can lead to faulty development through the mid-20s.
- THC can keep you from reaching your full potential. Studies show teen users will earn less money later in life.
- THC potency is much higher today than when I was a teen. Hitting a dab pen today is the same as smoking 50 joints in the 1980s.
- THC impairs learning, IQ, memory, motivation, graduation rates, concentration, and math and reading achievement.
- THC is the #1 predictor that a teen will go on to use harder substances (over alcohol).
- THC damages your lungs and heart in addition to your brain and causes health problems.
- THC stays in your brain for four weeks and is very hard to stop once addicted.
- THC results in higher levels of truancy, aggression, fighting, and psychotic disorders.
- THC affects coordination, depth perception, and reaction time, so you should never get in a car with someone who has used THC.
- THC use as a teen makes it more likely you'll have depression or suicidal thoughts. It doesn't help with anxiety or stress long term.
- THC products should be declined if offered at a party. It's hard to say no when others around you are using it, but you can always blame it on me.

This (xxx) will be our code word if you need me to pick you up, anywhere, anytime, no questions asked.

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www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana & www.samhsa.gov/substance-use/learn/marijuana/risks

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Edibles

Symptoms

- ★ Sleepiness
- ★ Agitation
- ★ Paranoia, anxiety, or panic
- ★ Nausea or vomiting
- ★ Confusion
- ★ Slurred speech
- ★ Elevated heart rate
- ★ Difficulty breathing
- ★ Dizziness
- ★ Seizures
- ★ Red eyes

If you think your child may have eaten anything containing THC, call the poison control center hotline at

800-222-1222

immediately, even if they're not showing any symptoms.

What are Marijuana Edibles?

Marijuana is dangerous in all forms for children and adolescents, both in the short and the long term. Marijuana edibles, infused with THC, often look just like regular candies and snacks.

THC edibles typically take 30 to 60 minutes after being eaten and digested to take effect, and it can take 3-4 hours to reach the full effects.

Many THC edibles are made to closely resemble brand name candy and snacks. Some popular THC-infused products include:

- ★ Gummy candies, chocolate bars, and suckers
- ★ Cookies, brownies, cupcakes, popcorn, and even ice cream

There are a few states, including Colorado, Washington, Oregon, and Alaska, that have laws requiring clear labeling indicating serving sizes and THC content. Some even require child-proof packaging, but this is not enough to keep our kids safe. Edible THC products still result in increasing numbers of accidental THC poisoning in children under the age of nine. Calls to the poison control center due to youth edible consumption have gone up dramatically since marijuana legalization.

Keep Your Kids Safe

- ★ The best way to keep your kids safe from THC edibles is not to have them in your home.
- ★ Store them the same way you store medications and other toxic products in out-of-reach or locked locations using child-resistant packaging or containers.
- ★ Do not use marijuana edibles in front of children.
- ★ Avoid buying THC edibles that come in packages that look just like real candies.
- ★ Talk to family members, friends, and caregivers about these safety measures.

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The Dangerous Truth About THC Infused Drinks

When THC is infused into drinks, manufacturers often use nanotechnology to create THC nanoparticles. This process makes the THC water-soluble and significantly increases its bioavailability, meaning the body absorbs it faster and more efficiently.

HOW IT WORKS:

1. THC Is Naturally Fat-Soluble:

- In its natural form, THC binds to fat, making it poorly soluble in water.
- This is why traditional edibles (like gummies or brownies) take longer to kick in, as the THC must be digested and processed through the liver.

2. Nanoparticle Technology:

- Manufacturers break down THC molecules into nanoparticles, reducing them to around 20-50 nanometers in size. For context: A human hair is about 80,000 to 100,000 nanometers in diameter.
- These nanoparticles are thousands of times smaller than a hair, making them easily dispersed in water.
- This allows the THC to mix seamlessly into beverages, making it water compatible.

3. Increased Bioavailability:

- The smaller particle size allows THC to bypass the digestive process and enter the bloodstream more quickly through the stomach lining.
- This leads to a faster and stronger high compared to traditional edibles.
- Users can feel effects in 10-15 minutes rather than the typical 30-90 minutes with regular edibles.
- The THC is also more potent because more of it is absorbed rather than lost during digestion.

Why This Matters for Addiction Risk:

- **Faster Onset, Stronger Effects:**
  - The rapid absorption and heightened potency can lead to overconsumption, as users may not realize how much they've ingested.
- **Increased Consumption Patterns:**
  - Because the effects are quicker and more intense, users may be more inclined to consume repeatedly, potentially increasing the risk of dependence and addiction.
- **Enhanced Delivery Equals Greater Impact:**
  - The improved bioavailability makes lower doses feel stronger, making products more addictive and potentially more dangerous, especially for inexperienced users.

Key Takeaway: THC nanoparticles in beverages make the drug more bioavailable, fast-acting, and potent, increasing the risk of overuse and addiction. This technology allows THC to hit the bloodstream rapidly, creating stronger and quicker psychoactive effects, which is why these drinks are particularly concerning from a public health and safety perspective.

Why is This Important? THC nanoparticles bypass digestion and enter the bloodstream quicker through the stomach lining, producing a faster, stronger high. Users feel effects in 10-15 minutes, compared to 30-90 minutes with regular edibles, and absorb more THC, making it more potent.

Why This Matters for Addiction Risk? Faster absorption/stronger effects = overconsumption/ repeated use = dependence and addiction. The enhanced potency makes even low doses more addictive, especially for inexperienced users.

If you are concerned about your child's use of THC beverages, speak with your child's doctor, therapist, or treatment center.

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pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4025268/pdf/apjtb-04-s1-s001.pdf

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TEEN THC TERMINOLOGY

Teens may discuss THC using various nicknames, so it's important for parents to stay informed about the terms associated with marijuana and THC products. We've compiled this page of slang terms to help you recognize the lingo.

People Who Use Marijuana
Airhead, stoner, burnout, connoisseur, gardener, hippie, pothead, tea head, viper, beekeeper

Smokable Marijuana *(noun)*
420, flower, joint, Mary Jane, Aunt Mary, pot, weed, herb, grass, trees, ganja, bud, reefer, chronic, cabbage, catnip, cheeb, dope, flower, green, hash, skunk, smoke, stem, trees, lettuce, broccoli, mota, dank, boom, cart

Marijuana Concentrates
246, 710, amber, badder, budder, butter, shatter, resin, sugar, ambrosia, BHO (butane hash oil), crumble, dabs, ear wax, errl, honey, ice, sap, wax, ISO oil, liquid gold

Synthetic Marijuana *(made in a lab, not from a plant)*
Black mamba, blaze, bliss, Bombay blue, genie, spice, K-2, moon rocks, zoh, zohai

Marijuana Measurements
Dime: ½ gram or $10 worth
Dub sack or G: 1 gram or $20 worth depending on your city and flower quality
Eighth or Henry VIII: 3.5 grams or ⅛ ounce
Quarter: 7 grams or ¼ ounce
Zip, Lid, or OZ ("oh-zee"): 1 ounce or 28 grams

To Use THC *(verb)*
Rip a pen, blast a joint, blow the roof, boot the gong, bite your lip, blow smoke, fire it up, fly Mexican airlines, mow the grass, have a tea party, toke a stick, poke it, blaze one, Cheech, get the wind, go loco, blink it (take the maximum draw on a vape pen until it blinks), blossom (take your first hit of the day), chief it

THC Slang Terms
Banger: a type of nail for dabbing
Baptizing: when you lick the entire blunt or joint to extends its burn time
Batty: a one-hitter
Bingers: bong loads
Bogart: holding on to a joint too long before passing it
Doink: a big joint
Dogwalker: a short joint; the short amount of time to smoke is supposed to be the same as taking a dog for a walk
Greening out: an intense reaction from using too much THC (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, dizziness, sweating, paleness, rapid heartbeat).
Pearl: a perfectly rolled joint or blunt
Persy or snap: personal bowl or bowl for one person
Pinner: a skinny joint that is thin like a sewing pin
Rip: the action of taking a deep inhale from a bong or vape
Roach: the butt of a joint or a blunt (looks like a cockroach)
Salad bowl: a bowl with a mix of different marijuana strains
Spliff: a joint with tobacco mixed in it
T-break: tolerance break, typically a 30-day break to allow THC to clear the body to lower tolerance

If you suspect your child is using marijuana, seek professional guidance and talk to your child's doctor.



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DO YOU KNOW THE SIGNS OF CANNABIS INDUCED PSYCHOSIS?

What is psychosis? Psychosis is the term for a collection of symptoms that happen when a person has trouble telling the difference between what's real and what's not.

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, "A diagnosis of Cannabis-Induced Psychotic Disorder is given when one or both of hallucinations and delusions are present, the hallucinations and/or delusions developed during or soon after cannabis intoxication, the disturbance does not occur exclusively during the course of a delirium, and the disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning."

These symptoms may be caused by use of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the active ingredient in marijuana that makes users high.



HALLUCINATIONS: Seeing/hearing things that aren't there or smelling/tasting things others don't.

DELUSIONS: Holding false beliefs, even when there is evidence that belief isn't true.

SCHIZOPHRENIA: Having this long-term mental disorder is 5x more likely in cannabis users.

PARANOIA: Thinking computers are bugged, cameras are in the walls, or the FBI is tracking them.

MOOD CHANGES: Becoming more anxious, having a depressed mood, or lacking motivation.

SUSPICION: Being distrustful of other people who are spying on them or "out to get them."

ODD MOVEMENTS: Moving your hands in an odd way, staring blankly into space, or making a repetitive motion.

SUICIDAL: Hearing command voices to kill themselves or having dark thoughts about ending one's life.

MANIC BEHAVIOR: Acting with extreme excitement and hyperactivity, with abnormal energy and racing thoughts.

AGGRESSION: Becoming angry, irritable, or violent toward others.

BEHAVIORAL: Decreasing hygiene, sleep, social activities, athletics, and academics.

OVER-PERSONALIZING: Believing they have special powers, a social media post is about them, or they are famous.

If you have a loved one using cannabis, vapes, dabs, edibles, or any synthetic THC products such as Delta-8 vapes, who demonstrates these symptoms, TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR TODAY!

https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6861931/

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JohnnysAmbassadors.org

Johnny's Ambassadors was formed after 19-year-old Johnny Stack became psychotic and died by suicide after using high-potency marijuana dabs and vapes in Colorado.

Johnny's Ambassadors' mission is to educate parents, teens, and communities about the dangers of today's high-THC marijuana on adolescent brain development, mental illness, and suicide.

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Saving Our Youth from the Harms of Marijuana

Visit our website for
more information and resources
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