

# YOUTH AND MARIJUANA

August 31, 2015

## MARIJUANA USE BY COLORADO YOUTH



**ILLEGAL  
IN NORTH CAROLINA**



**Four out of five high school students do not use marijuana.**

In 2013, 19.7 percent of Colorado high school students used marijuana in the last 30 days.<sup>1</sup>

**Be sure to talk early and often with youth about the risks of using marijuana.**

Of Colorado high school seniors who have used marijuana, more than **one out of three** started before age 15.<sup>2</sup>

It is easier for youth to say no to peer pressure if they do not think "everyone" is doing it.

## YOUTH ARE AT SPECIAL RISK FOR HARM<sup>2</sup>



**Brain development** is not complete until age 25. For the best chance to reach their full potential, youth should not use marijuana.



Youth who use marijuana regularly are more likely to have a **hard time learning, problems remembering and lower math and reading scores.**



**Marijuana is addictive.** It is harder to stop using marijuana if started at a young age.



Youth who use marijuana – even occasionally – may be **more likely to do risky things later in life.** This may include use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Regular marijuana use by adolescents and young adults is strongly associated with developing psychotic symptoms and disorders such as schizophrenia in adulthood, is associated with impaired learning, memory, math and reading achievement, even 28 days after last use and may be associated with low academic achievement, such as not graduating from high school or college, lower income, and more unemployment.

# CONSEQUENCES FOR YOUTH

***It is illegal for youth under the age of 21 to purchase, possess or use retail marijuana.***

*There are serious consequences for youth, like...*



**Breaking family and community rules:** Set clear rules for youth. Share that younger siblings and neighbors see them as role models, so they should not use marijuana.



**Breaking school or after school activity rules:** Youth may have to take drug counseling or be suspended, expelled or charged with breaking the law.



**Breaking Colorado laws:** Youth may get a minor in possession charge. This can mean fines, public service, substance abuse education, loss of a driver's license and misdemeanor or felony charges.



**Breaking federal laws:** Since marijuana is not legal in all states, youth with marijuana charges may not get financial aid to help pay for college.

Visit [Colorado.gov/Marijuana](http://Colorado.gov/Marijuana) for more information on retail marijuana laws and health risks.

## TALKING TIPS FOR ADULTS: HELP YOUTH BETTER UNDERSTAND THE RISKS

**Only about half** of Colorado high school students think that regularly using marijuana is harmful.<sup>1</sup>

**Listen carefully and stay positive.** Keep the conversation open so youth can come to you with questions. Knowing they can ask questions helps youth make good choices.

➡ *Talking with youth about their dreams helps them feel more connected to caring adults.*

**Be honest.** Explain how staying out of trouble and doing well in school can help them reach their goals.

➡ *Youth who think marijuana is risky are much less likely to use marijuana regularly.<sup>3</sup>*

Visit [SpeakNowColorado.org](http://SpeakNowColorado.org) for warning signs of high-risk behavior and useful talking tips to help youth make healthy choices.

### References

- 1 Colorado Department of Education, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Colorado Department of Human Services- Office of Behavioral Health. Healthy Kids Colorado Survey: Marijuana Overview of 2013 HKCS data.
- 2 Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. Monitoring Health Concerns Related to Marijuana in Colorado: 2014. January 2015.
- 3 US Department of Health and Human Services. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2011 Data, Trends in Adolescent Substance Use and Perception of Risk from Substance Use.

Heavy marijuana use: daily or near daily (5-7 days/week)

Regular marijuana use: weekly (1-4 days/week)

Occasional marijuana use: less than weekly



**COLORADO**  
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