

Talking With Teens About Cannabis

Helping them to make the right choice...



Many teens are under the impression that cannabis is safe and not harmful in any way. Oftentimes adults in their lives may be reinforcing that message. Many young people don't see it as a big deal or that it may affect them in the short and long term.

From a health and a medical standpoint, it is a big deal, given what we know today about teenage brain development. This is a conversation worth having. There is research that suggests that parents who talk openly and directly with their kids about substance use have teens that are less likely to experiment with drugs.

1

KNOW THE FACTS

The facts to help you to have the right discussion with your child.

2

KNOW THE RISKS

The consequences to health, education and future from cannabis use.

3

KNOW WHERE THE FIND HELP

Including national and local agencies.

FRANK

Talk to Frank

An online drugs resource for parents and young people
talktofrank.com



Health Talk

Confidential advice for children on drugs and other health issues.

Healthtalk.org



NHS

Speak to the NHS school nurse at Oxford Spires Academy.

Know The Facts:

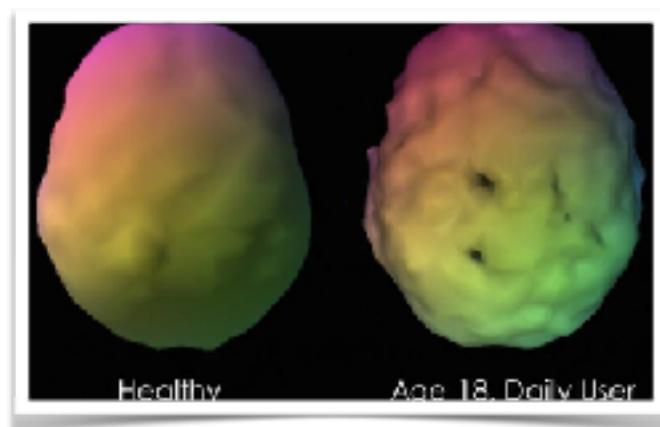
The cannabis that is grown today has a higher concentration of THC. THC is the mind-altering substance that is in cannabis.

Cannabis comes from the cannabis plant but the way it is being grown today is different. There are also more formulations now that did not exist in the past.

Cannabis can be inhaled, smoked, vaped and there are now edible forms. One thing that we've seen even with adults, who were former users and now turning to different formulations, is that the cannabis is not affecting their bodies in the way that they were used to. It is not quite the same drug that was out there in the past.

Among younger adults aged 16 to 24, cannabis was also the most commonly used drug, with 15.8% having used it in the last year. Cannabis was the first illegal drug used by 82% of drug users. In a recent UK study, 2 in 15 young people reported using cannabis at least once.

Signs that a young person **may** be using cannabis include: changes in their interactions with others, including detachment and paranoia; changing sleep patterns; red or bloodshot eyes; appearing slow, confused or lethargic; changes in academic performance.



Know the Risks:

- Cannabis affects the basal ganglia and the cerebellum. These control movement, balance and coordination. Cannabis causes a delay in messaging between the brain and the body. It puts them at increased risk of falls and accidents.
- THC affects the prefrontal cortex, where decision making happens. This can make engaging in other risky behaviours more likely.
- THC also affects the hippocampus in the brain, affecting short and long-term memory and concentration. There may also be a link between cannabis and mental health issues.
- Buying and using cannabis may put your child at risk of exploitation and pressure from others, including gangs (see guidance to parents on gangs).

KNOW THE LAW:

Cannabis is a Class B drug in the UK. Possession may result in a maximum penalty of 5 years in prison and an unlimited fine. Supply may lead to a maximum of 14 years in prison and unlimited fine.

Sharing drugs with friends is also considered 'supply', or dealing, under UK law.

Possession of small amounts of cannabis may result in a police warning and a £90 fine.

Possession and use of cannabis, or intent to distribute, at school may lead to permanent exclusion.