

“How do I talk to
my teen about **marijuana?**”

**Start with
information.**

**The best time to talk to your teens
about marijuana is before they start.**

**When discussing marijuana with teens, being aware of up-to-date
information (and misinformation) is vital.**

The marijuana landscape has evolved into big business. Recent changes in state legislation legalizing forms of marijuana have amplified the use of marijuana in misleadingly beneficial ways through a barrage of marketing campaigns designed to appeal to teens. 151.1 million “Gen Z” teen consumers are considered an entry point for legitimate marijuana marketing via social media, billboards and print media. 94% of teens have been exposed to marijuana marketing on a daily basis.*

A common misperception among teens is that marijuana is safer than alcohol and other drugs. One byproduct of this marketing is a masking of the negative health effects specifically associated with adolescent use including memory loss, increased aggression, and increased use of other substances, etc.* A recent study found that marijuana use has a more negative impact on a teenager’s cognitive development than alcohol.*

Not Your Father’s Weed (Literally)

Lacking any of the eco-friendly plant matter we’ve been led to associate with this leaf — not only is today’s marijuana over 20 times more potent than it was in the 1970s, but the chemical that causes the “high” (THC) is being isolated into new concentrated (up to 99.9 % pure) oils and resins that can be vaped, eaten, and “dabbed” (ignited and inhaled) much more efficiently and covertly than by smoking it.*



Now That You Know, Where Do You Start?

Learning these facts is important. But it’s just as crucial to create a plan for an open dialogue and to be mindful of engaging your teen with respect. Positive role modeling, compassion and the truth will go a long way to help you start acting.

**Use the following steps and resources to start
your own Communication Action Plan.** ►



Fast Facts

- Marijuana is the most readily misused substance among U.S. teens.*
- Contrary to what your teen may hear, let them know that MOST of their peers and HS kids are NOT using marijuana.*
- Marijuana can be addictive. 1 in 10 marijuana users will become addicted.
- 90% of Americans with a substance use disorder began using substances before the age of 18.*
- States that have legalized recreational marijuana have exponentially higher youth access.*
- Teens who interact with cannabis brands via social media are five times more likely to consume the product than those who don’t.*

Start Here:



Tips For Success

- Be empathetic.
- Try to recall what it was like to be 14.
- Ask questions.
- Be an attentive listener.
- Employ Positive Parenting techniques.
- Avoid criticism.
- Commit to patience.
- Share facts and resources.
- Answer questions.
- Remind and repeat.

1 Before You Talk: Be Ready to Listen.

A conversation is a two-way street. Mutual respect, transparency, compassion and hearing what your teen says will go a long way toward giving your facts and position more clout. Your teen started thinking about or using marijuana for a reason. Start there. **IMPORTANT:** No one resource, or document is a magic bullet. Assemble all the available tools at your disposal into your playbook. Start with the PDF by the CDC: **What You Need To Know About Marijuana Use In Teens***

2 The Conversation: Look for Your Moment.

There is no “one size fits all” time or way to initiate a conversation like this. Your teen’s reactions are likely to be affected in part by their age and maturity level. The best results come from collaboration. Watch for the right lead-in. Avoid confrontational tendencies. Having patience and empathy will build trust. The Partnership to End Addiction breaks down the steps to have an effective conversation in this guide: **Marijuana Talk Kit: What You Need to Know To Talk With Your Teen About Marijuana***

3 You've Gotten Their Attention: Now What?

Your teen may be using or contemplating using marijuana for social reasons. Find out what he or she thinks they know about marijuana. Changes are they are unaware of the vast potential harm. The marijuana industry spends millions of dollars on marketing cannabis associated products as “natural” or “plant-based” therapies. Provide answers to questions and dispel myths. Appeal to their good judgment. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration offers a question-and-answer information sheet that can facilitate a factual and healthy discussion related to marijuana: **Tips For Teens: The Truth About Marijuana***

4 Great Start: Don't Stop!

All these pieces can help to formulate a communication plan for you and your teen. The effects of teen marijuana use can include school difficulties, short-term memory loss, increased aggression, and risky sexual behaviors. One talk is probably not going to be enough. Your teen is going to need ongoing support to help them quit. Keep the lines of communication open and the conversation alive. Discover resources together and encourage them to be part of the process. One resource available to help your teen feel empowered to quit is the **Substance Abuse And Mental Health Services National Helpline***



Regardless of all the resources that marijuana companies pour into their marketing and lobbying efforts, the truth is out there and available to you. All these tools and more are available on the **PAStart.org/Marijuana**. Use our collection of links and materials to create a strategy that will engage and empower you and your teen. They’re all designed to help you get started.



* For an expanded set of additional resources, all data citations and bonus interactive materials, click on the QR code above or visit pastart.org/marijuana

Learn More. PAStart.org

 Commonwealth Prevention Alliance

Licensed material is being used for illustrative purposes only, and any person depicted in the licensed material is a model.