

Marijuana Key Points and Tips for Parents



- Marijuana use has declined from the late 1990s through 2007. Unfortunately, this trend appears to be slowing, and marijuana use remains at unacceptably high levels, as the most commonly used illegal drug. (http://teens.drugabuse.gov/facts/facts_mj1.php)
- Middle school is the best time to be talking to your children about marijuana and making the case for why you don't want them to use it - now or later. Continue talking about your expectations as they get older. It's never too late to start this conversation. TALK EARLY. TALK OFTEN.
 - Note: 6th graders receive most of their information about alcohol and drugs from parents whereas by 12th grade they hear more from their peers (MN Student Survey '10)
 - Marijuana negatively affects memory and learning at a time when this is their critical task. Compromised learning and academic performance now can negatively impact their future.
 - Teen brains are not yet mature. Marijuana can compromise this development, especially if heavy use ensues.
 - You don't know if you are vulnerable to addiction, and it is a real risk – don't risk this poor trajectory. This is especially true for kids with other challenges such as ADHD.
- Be fully aware that kids will hear about marijuana from their peers and the media and will perceive it as available as they grow older. Make sure you have a voice now when they are listening.
 - Know that they will likely believe that more of their peers use than actually do. Probe their assertions. Historically we have seen about 80% of our high school population choosing not to use. Most teens don't use.
- Be thoughtful about the arguments for legalizing the medical use of marijuana. Some key facts:
 - Most "dispensary patients" are between the ages of 18-25. This group is usually not the people suffering from chronic or terminal illness that advocates portray as the beneficiaries of this legalization.
 - "The basic rule with any drug is if the drug becomes more available in the society, there will be more use of the drug," Thomas Crowley, a University of Colorado psychiatry professor and director of the University's Division of Substance Dependence, told The Denver Post. "And as use expands, there will be more people who have problems with the drug."
 - Since Colorado legalized marijuana for medicinal use, treatment center clinicians are treating more and more teens for marijuana addiction. At the Denver Health Medical Center, treatment referrals have tripled with 83 percent of the teens who smoke pot daily saying they obtained it from a medical marijuana patient.
 - Doctors who are prescribing marijuana are not evaluating all treatment options for patients, but have set up shop to prescribe one drug only. This is not the standard for the practice of medicine that we have come to expect.
- Pay attention to news about an herbal incense/potpourri also known as K2, Spice, Demon, Triple X & Mr. Nice Guy known among users as synthetic marijuana or "fake pot". Some states and MN counties are banning sales as we speak.



Working Together to Reduce
Underage Substance Use

www.tonkacares.org

Created by ID & MS, 1/11