



What Parents, Mentors, and Trusted Adults Need to KNOW ABOUT CANNABIS

You have to be 21 years old to buy, use or possess cannabis (also known as marijuana, pot, weed and more) in New York State.

Parents and Trusted Adults: You can impact whether the youth and young adults in your life use cannabis. It's never too soon to start the conversation. Talk with them early and often to help them understand how underage use of cannabis can impact them.

Your support can help them make safer, healthier choices.

CANNABIS AND THE DEVELOPING BRAIN

Studies have shown that full brain development is not complete until age 25. Research suggests that using cannabis while the brain is still developing can change how it builds connections that are important for attention, memory, and learning. Cannabis can also affect how parts of the brain responsible for our judgment and decision-making grow and work. These changes can negatively impact school performance and continued chronic use can have other adverse outcomes.

Frequent cannabis use by youth and young adults may increase the risk of mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, and serious mental illnesses like psychotic disorders.

Studies have shown that starting to use cannabis at an early age and the frequent use of cannabis with higher THC content by people who have a family history of serious mental illness can increase their risk.

SAFE AND RESPONSIBLE STORAGE OF CANNABIS PRODUCTS

Safe and responsible storage of cannabis products means making sure any cannabis at home is locked up, out of sight, and out of reach of children (and pets). Accidentally consuming cannabis products is a risk for children and animals that can result in cannabis toxicity or the need for emergency medical attention.

Call the Poison Control Center at 800-222-1222 after an accidental exposure to cannabis products.

Contact your veterinarian immediately if your pet has ingested a cannabis-containing product.



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TIPS FOR TALKING WITH THE YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS IN YOUR LIFE

- Start the conversation early (whenever they first start asking questions) and before they consider using.
- Plan to have more than one conversation – many short talks work best. Keep the conversation casual instead of having a formal family meeting or one on one.
- Look for natural ways to bring up the subject – such as when driving past a dispensary or seeing a reference to cannabis use on TV.
- Focus on the facts and how cannabis may impact their developing brain.
- Talk with your children about having an “exit plan” if they’re offered cannabis. Peer pressure can be powerful and having a plan to avoid it can help them make healthier choices. Talk with the youth and young adults in your life about what they would do if faced with a decision about using drugs or alcohol, such as texting a code word to a family member. Offer a code word youth and young adults can text you when faced with a decision on using substances.
- Be aware of your own attitudes and behaviors - embrace the fact that this conversation may feel awkward for both of you. Remember that they are more likely to use cannabis if you do. Set your expectations and communicate them clearly.
- Encourage questions, be nonjudgmental, and listen to their ideas.
- Keep calm and let them know you are there for them. If you think the youth and young adults in your life may be using cannabis, make sure they know they can always come to you, or another trusted person, if they’re in need of an adult.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD IS USING CANNABIS

- Stay calm - overreacting may lead youth to rebel, feel resentful, or take greater risks.
- Talk about your concerns and give the facts and positive reasons for wanting them to stop using cannabis with a focus on the impact that cannabis can have on the developing brain.
- If they have their driver’s license, remind them not to use cannabis and drive. Cannabis slows your reaction time and motor coordination and it can be incredibly dangerous to drive under the influence. It is illegal and they could get a DUI and get in greater trouble.



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Office of Cannabis
Management

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT THE OFFICE OF CANNABIS MANAGEMENT

Website: cannabis.ny.gov

Email: info@ocm.ny.gov

Call: 1-888-OCM-5151 (1-888-626-5151)



NYC Poison Control Center



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