

Legalization of Cannabis

Factsheet for Parents and Caregivers

What does the legalization of cannabis mean for your kids?

As of October 17, 2018, cannabis will be legal for adults only. It will still be illegal for youth under 19 to purchase, sell or consume cannabis. It will also be illegal to sell cannabis products that appeal to youth or that have packaging or labelling that appeals to youth.

Vancouver School Board's Code of Conduct around controlled substances for students remains unchanged: Students may not attend school or school functions while in possession of or while under the influence of any intoxicating, banned or controlled substances.

However, with attitudes toward cannabis consumption changing, this is an ideal opportunity to have important conversations with your children about marijuana and drugs.

Science says

Research suggests that youth who start using drugs early and frequently are at much greater risk of problem drug use. Experts recommend not using or delaying use until age 20 or older.

Science indicates that using cannabis regularly before age 25 can harm the development of your brain and lead to long-term problems with memory, cognition and attention. Delaying use until the brain is fully developed decreases potential impacts. Cannabis can also affect your ability to think and make decisions in all aspects of life including school, recreational activities and relationships.

Speaking with your kids about cannabis and drug use



Knowing some facts about cannabis will equip you for conversations with youth about marijuana use. A good way to start the conversation is to allow teens to generate ideas about commonly held beliefs of cannabis use.

Listen and engage in a back-and-forth dialogue. Be sincere and curious about what they know and ask questions that help them think about those ideas.

Explore what youth already know and encourage thoughtful reflection. Almost all teens will need to make choices around cannabis use at some point. Ask: Why do you think some people choose not to smoke weed?

Use open-ended questions to explore several sides of the issue in a general way. For example: What do young people think about someone who chooses not to smoke weed? What are their views about those who choose to use?

Mention some of the reasons people might not use marijuana: they don't want to feel out of control; don't need it to have fun; don't want to disappoint parents, friends, teachers; like feeling healthy and thinking clearly; don't want to impact their sports or creativity; like being a good role model for younger youth.

Discuss the different risks associated with marijuana use for adults and youth. There are important benefits to avoiding or delaying regular marijuana use as a teen.

Know the facts



It takes at least **10 minutes** to feel the effect of inhaled cannabis and **at least one hour** to feel the effects of edible cannabis products.

Mixing cannabis with alcohol or other drugs should be avoided as this can increase impairment and cause symptoms such as anxiety, dizziness, sweating, nausea and vomiting.



Operating a car, motorcycle, bike or boat while high is impaired driving and is illegal, just like drinking and driving. Even small amounts of cannabis can affect a person's attention, reaction time and ability to judge distances, even if they don't feel impaired. Don't drive or ride with a driver who has used cannabis.

If too much cannabis is used, remain calm, stay hydrated, and eat something. Stay with friends in a safe place. The effects will wear off.

Where to get more information and help?



VSB's Supporting And Connecting Youth (SACY) program provides substance use health promotion to engage Vancouver parents, teachers, students, administrators and the greater community. Visit your school counsellor or your SACY worker to take part in a SACY sponsored event at your school.

SACY works in schools with youth and offers a wealth of resources about drug use prevention and health. Check out their website at <http://www.vsb.bc.ca/sacy>.