

CANNABIS AND THC PRODUCTS

FACTS FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS



WHAT IS CANNABIS?

Cannabis is a species of plant. The words “cannabis” and “marijuana” don’t mean the exact same thing.

- ▶ **Cannabis** refers to all products derived from the *Cannabis sativa* plant.
- ▶ **Marijuana** refers to cannabis products that contain high amounts of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).
- ▶ **THC** is a natural compound found in cannabis that causes a “high.” Delta-8, Delta-9, and Delta-10 are forms of THC. Delta-9 is the most potent form.
- ▶ **CBD** is another natural compound found in cannabis. CBD does not cause a “high.”
- ▶ **Hemp** is a part of cannabis that has lower THC levels than marijuana.

This fact sheet follows the Minnesota Department of Health in using the term “cannabis” instead of “marijuana” as the word “marijuana” came into usage in the U.S. to leverage anti-immigrant sentiments.¹

SHORT-TERM EFFECTS ON THE BODY

Everyone’s body reacts to cannabis differently. Weight, metabolism, gender, and eating habits can affect how quickly it is absorbed into the body.

Effects may include:

- ▶ Relaxed or “high” feeling
- ▶ Racing heart
- ▶ Slower reactions or slurred speech
- ▶ Trouble thinking, concentrating, or remembering
- ▶ Temporary confusion, anxiety, panic, or paranoia

HOW IS CANNABIS USED?


Cannabis is often smoked, vaped, dabbed (inhaling vaporized cannabis concentrate), or taken as edibles. Vaping and dabbing involve high THC concentrations. Smoking is the fastest way to feel the effects of cannabis.

EDIBLES

Edibles are food and drink products that contain THC and can cause intoxication and impairment. The THC can come naturally from the cannabis plant, or it can be created from CBD.

Edibles come in many forms, including:

- ▶ Gummy candies
- ▶ Baked goods (cookies/brownies)
- ▶ Chocolates
- ▶ Beverages (soda/juice)



It takes longer to feel the effects of THC after taking edibles than after smoking or vaping cannabis.

Some EFFECTS may:

Take up to **2 HOURS** to **KICK-IN** and **LAST** up to **10 HOURS**

Be mindful of the amount of THC in a serving and remember it may take over an hour to feel effects. Taking multiple servings of edibles in a short period of time increases the risk of poisoning.

CANNABIS CAN BE ADDICTIVE

Research shows that:

- ▶ Today’s cannabis products have much more THC than products from a few decades ago.²
- ▶ 1 in 10 adults who use the drug can become addicted.³
- ▶ People who start using cannabis before the age of 18, or who use cannabis often, are more likely to develop cannabis use disorder.²

More research is needed to understand the long-term and permanent health effects of cannabis use.



An August 2024 study found that adults with cannabis use disorder were more likely to develop head and neck cancer than those who did not use the drug.⁴



Cannabis is illegal in Minnesota for anyone under the age of 21 who is not a certified medical cannabis patient.

Youth and young adults are at higher risk of harm from cannabis use, and more research is needed on the long-term effects of cannabis on young people.¹

IMPACT ON ADOLESCENTS

Evidence shows⁵ that cannabis can:

- ▶ Harm the developing teen brain.
- ▶ Cause academic difficulties.
- ▶ Increase accidents and injuries.
- ▶ Worsen mental health conditions.
- ▶ Create risk for addiction.



NO AMOUNT OF THC IS SAFE FOR THE DEVELOPING TEEN BRAIN.

SIGNS OF USE

Cannabis use can be difficult to detect.

Signs of use include:

- ▶ Unusual odors
- ▶ Bloodshot eyes
- ▶ Shifts in mood and behavior, including being more secretive
- ▶ Decline in grades
- ▶ Changes in friends and activities
- ▶ Photos and videos of drugs or drug use on phones
- ▶ Having devices like pipes and vapes

CAREGIVER ACTIONS

- ▶ Recognize different products kids may be using and watch for signs of use.
- ▶ Encourage family meals and staying active in hobbies or sports.
- ▶ Be a role model. Don't use cannabis products in front of youth or when caring for them.
- ▶ Talk early and often about cannabis. Express clear disapproval of use.
- ▶ Store or lock cannabis in the original packaging and safely out of reach of children and pets. Store edibles away from food.
- ▶ Don't use cannabis and drive. Driving while impaired by cannabis is illegal. Other activities can be unsafe too, such as boating, biking, snowboarding, or operating machinery.

WHAT CAN CAREGIVERS DO IF A YOUNG PERSON IS USING CANNABIS?

- ▶ Find a good time to talk to them and make a plan.
- ▶ Be calm and ask open-ended questions for understanding.
- ▶ Listen and agree on next steps and consequences.
- ▶ Keep a positive connection to rebuild trust for guidance and support. Fighting and shaming only damages relationships.
- ▶ Seek help from a doctor, school counselor, or social worker. No medications are currently available to treat a cannabis use disorder, but counseling and therapy can help.

Watch for accidental poisoning from cannabis products. Signs could include extreme confusion or anxiety, paranoia, panic, fast heart rate, increased blood pressure, hallucinations, severe nausea, vomiting, or unresponsiveness.



If a child ingests a cannabis product like an edible, call the Poison Center at **1-800-222-1222**, regardless if symptoms are present. If the child stops breathing, collapses, or has a seizure, call **911**.

RESOURCES

Search "cannabis" on these websites:

- ▶ [samhsa.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov)
- ▶ [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)
- ▶ health.state.mn.us
- ▶ [mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org)
- ▶ nida.nih.gov
- ▶ mn.gov/ocm

¹ Cannabis and your Health, Minnesota Department of Health, 10/9/2024, <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/cannabis/yourhealth.html>

² Understanding Your Risk for Cannabis Use Disorder, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 12/5/2024, <https://www.cdc.gov/cannabis/health-effects/cannabis-use-disorder.html>

³ Learn about Marijuana Risks, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 7/29/2024, <https://www.samhsa.gov/marijuana>

⁴ Cannabis Use and Head and Neck Cancer, JAMA Network, 8/8/2024, https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamaotolaryngology/article-abstract/2822269#google_vignette

⁵ Cannabis and Teens, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2/15/2024, <https://www.cdc.gov/cannabis/health-effects/cannabis-and-teens.html>