

#1. Legal Doesn't Mean Safe.

8 Things to Know About Marijuana

Both locally and nationally, marijuana use amongst adolescents is on the rise. While some may say that it is not as dangerous as alcohol, there is a lot of new research which documents the harmful effects that marijuana has on adolescents.

Here's how you can have your SAY and help that change.

1. Know the facts about what marijuana does to adolescent brains:

- 1 in 6 teens who begin using before the age of 15 will become addicted.
- Adolescents who use marijuana regularly over an extended period of time lose an average of 8 IQ points, which do not return after use is stopped.
- Casual use of marijuana in teens is linked to deficits in decision-making and memory.
- College students who use skip more classes, earn lower grades and drop out more often than those who do not use.

2. Know the relationship between marijuana use and mental illness:

- Almost a dozen studies have documented that regular marijuana use is linked to a significant increase in risk of developing a psychotic illness such as schizophrenia.
- This risk is even greater for those with a family history of mental illness.
- The risk is greater the younger the use begins or the more often the adolescent uses.

3. Know the relationship between marijuana and other health conditions:

- Marijuana significantly increases the risk of testicular cancer.
- The risk of stroke is increased in young adults who use marijuana and tobacco.

4. Know the risk between marijuana and other high-risk behaviors:

- Individuals are twice as likely to have an accident if driving after smoking marijuana than if they had not smoked.
- One of nine drivers in fatal crashes test positive for marijuana.

Parents...

5. Know the warning signs: drop in grades, significant changes in friends, quitting activities such as sports or other hobbies, personality changes, increase in negative attitude, irritability, anger, depression and defensiveness.

6. Trust your gut! Chances are if you think your child is using marijuana, he or she probably is.

7. Keep an open dialogue between you and your adolescent about the risks of marijuana use and your expectations for your child. Approach your conversations from the point of love and concern.

Teens...

8. Know where to go for help or more information. Parents, teachers, relatives, school counselors, coaches and religious leaders are all people to turn to for help. Or visit these local resources:

www.adamhsc.org | **First Call For Help: 216.436.2000** | www.211cleveland.org

(For more information and references, go to: *Marijuana The Science: What we Know About its Effects on Health* by Rochelle D. Schwartz-Bloom, Ph.D., Professor of Pharmacology, Duke University Medical Center.)



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SAY – Social Advocates for Youth is a school-based prevention and early intervention program of Bellefaire JCB for students in middle and high school. The SAY Coalition sponsors educational programs, parent education, and youth leadership.