

KEEP YOUR KIDS

DRUG

ALCOHOL

THC

NICOTINE

JUUL®

LIQUOR

METH

VAPE

MARIJUANA

BOOZE

TOBACCO

POT

SUBSTANCE

FREE

MARIJUANA

THC has lifelong negative effects on brain development.

Know the Risks

Marijuana can be smoked or vaped (in an e-cigarette or vape mod). THC, the chemical in marijuana that gives a "high," is also found in products like candy and soft drinks. While some U.S. states have legalized medical and/or recreational use of marijuana, NO state allows minors to purchase or use marijuana or THC-containing products. Chronic use can lead to dependence, and THC affects brain cells related to learning, memory, coordination and addiction, especially in those under 25, whose brains are still developing. Chronic marijuana use has been linked with depression, anxiety and an increased risk of schizophrenia.

Know the Facts

- **Despite the significant risks** to youth, they are using. In Region II, **17% of tenth graders** and **26% of twelfth graders** have tried marijuana. The number of twelfth graders who report using it regularly (at least once in the past 30 days) is **11%**.
- Kids are starting at **younger ages** as well. **Almost 4.6% of Region II eighth graders** have already tried marijuana.
- Youth report their top reasons to use are **to fit in, to self-medicate** and to **reduce anxiety** or to cope with feelings of **depression**. Rural youth report that boredom also plays a part in the choice to use marijuana.
- **Marijuana can be easier to obtain** than alcohol, according to recent surveys of young people.
- Signs of use include bloodshot eyes, unsteadiness, unusual silliness and laughter, tiredness and use of incense, scented candles or room sprays.
- Parental attitudes matter. In our region, about **13% of twelfth graders** report that their parents "don't see smoking marijuana as wrong or very wrong" in recent surveys.

Focus on Prevention

Open conversation is the most important way to help young people make positive choices. With marijuana use, sharing the facts and dispelling misconceptions ("But it's legal in some places!") is a good first step. Be open and supportive, but watch their reaction to the discussion. If they overreact, this can be a sign they are experimenting or using. If so, let them know your expectations clearly. Make sure they know this is still an illegal substance, and one that can permanently affect their brain development. Talk about self-confidence, fitting in with friends and how anxiety or depression might impact their choice.



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