

Maine SAMHS 5 KEY PREVENTION MESSAGES REGARDING MARIJUANA

The Maine Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHS) has developed the following evidence-based key prevention messages regarding marijuana. For more information: www.maine.gov/dhhs/samhs/.

Overall Message:

Marijuana use changes teens' brains, bodies, and behaviors. Help Maine teens have safe, healthy and successful futures!

1) Impairment Message:

Marijuana use lowers teens' good judgment and self-control. This may lead to bad decisions and risky behavior.

- Heavy marijuana use is linked to an increased risk of a motor vehicle crashes.ⁱ
- Nationally, in 2011, 57 % of Emergency Department visits for illicit drug use among 12-24 year olds involved marijuana.ⁱⁱ
- Using marijuana weekly or more has also been shown to double a teen's risk of depression or anxiety.^{iii iv}

2) Health Message:

Your teen only has one brain and one body. Marijuana use damages both in a way that can make problems for them now and in the future.

- Studies indicate that problems with attention, learning, memory and processing speeds can be associated with heavy marijuana use during adolescence.^{v vi}
- The amount of tar inhaled by marijuana smokers and the level of carbon monoxide absorbed are three to five times greater than from tobacco smoke.^{vii}
- Marijuana contains more cancer causing chemicals than tobacco. Marijuana smokers inhale deeply and hold the smoke in their lungs longer which may increase their risk for developing lung cancer.^{viii}
- Recent studies have shown a link between frequent marijuana use and the occurrence of testicular cancer.^{ix}

3) Future/Success Message:

Marijuana use keeps teens from doing their best in school, work, and learning new skills. This affects them for the rest of their life.

- Marijuana use in teens has been linked to lower academic performance and reduced job prospects.^x

- Heavy marijuana users experience attention and memory problems which last beyond the time when they are high. Studies indicate these problems can worsen with years of regular use.^{xi}

4) Addiction Message:

Teens who use marijuana are at an increased risk for addiction which leads to health and safety risks.

- Research has established that marijuana is addictive and that it is three times more likely to lead to dependence among adolescents than adults.^{xii}
- About 1 in 6 of those who start using marijuana in their teens develop addiction^{xiii}
- Nationally, in 2011, 872,000 persons reported receiving treatment for marijuana use^{xiv}

5) Perception of Harm/Normalization Message:

Marijuana is a harmful drug. It is stronger than in the past, contains dangerous chemicals, and can be laced with other drugs. Teens who use marijuana can't know for sure what they are putting into their bodies and how it will affect them.

- Today's marijuana is far more potent: The average THC content in marijuana has risen from under 4% in 1983 to more than 10% in 2008.^{xv}
- Greater marijuana potency means a smaller amount can make someone higher, faster- and perhaps far more intoxicated than they can handle.^{xvi}
- Marijuana users risk exposure to dangerous pesticides which pose a significant risk to human health.^{xvii}

RESOURCES

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- ^v Meier, MH et. al (2012) Persistent Cannabis Users Show Neuropsychological Decline from Childhood to Midlife. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. 109(40) e2657-e2664.
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- ^{vii} Drugs and Human Performance Fact Sheets - Cannabis / Marijuana (D9 -Tetrahydrocannabinol, THC). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, n.d. Accessed at: <http://www.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/research/job185drugs/cannabis.htm> .
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- ^{xi} Solowij N, Stephens RS, Roffman RA, et al. (2002) Cognitive Functioning of Long-term Heavy Cannabis Users Seeking Treatment. *JAMA*, 287(9):1123-1131.
- ^{xii} Gfroerer, JC, Wu, LT., & Penne, MA. (2002). Initiation of Marijuana Use: Trends, Patterns, and Implications (Analytic Series: A-17, DHHS Publication No. SMA 02-3711). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies.
- ^{xiii} Wagner, FA & Anthony, JC (2002) From first drug use to drug dependence; developmental periods of risk for dependence upon cannabis, cocaine, and alcohol. *Neuropsychopharmacology* 26(4), 479-488.
- ^{xiv} Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2011 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings*, NSDUH Series H-44, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 12-4713. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2012.
- ^{xv} Mehmedic Z, et al (2010) Potency Trends of r9-THC and Other Cannabinoids in Confiscated Cannabis Preparations from 1993 to 2008. *Journal of Forensic Science*, 55(5):1209-17.
- ^{xvi} *ibid*
- ^{xvii} U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of California (2012) Environmental Charges Filed in Marijuana Cultivation Cases. *News: September 27, 2012* Accessed at: <http://www.justice.gov/usao/cae/news/docs/2012/09-2012/09-27-12EPA%20Superseding.html>