USING MARIJUANA UNDER THE AGE OF 21

Choosing to use cannabis (marijuana, hashish, weed, pot, edibles, etc.) before 21 can affect the plans you’ve made for your future.

WEED USE AFFECTS YOUR PERFORMANCE
These facts about how cannabis use influences your body and brain will help you make informed decisions about your health.

**BRAIN**

Human brains do not fully develop until our mid-20s. Regular cannabis use before then can lead to harmful physical changes that can permanently impact your memory, learning, and attention.1,2

**LUNGS**

Like tobacco, smoking cannabis can harm your lungs. Marijuana smoke has many of the same toxins and chemicals found in tobacco smoke, and inhaling them increases your risk of developing lung problems.3,4

**SUCCESS**

Research shows that if you start using cannabis before you are 18 or use cannabis regularly you may be at higher risk for:
- Skipping classes12
- Getting lower grades13
- Dropping out of school14
- Unemployment or not getting the kind of job you want14,15

**MENTAL HEALTH**

Regular marijuana users are significantly more likely than nonusers to develop long-lasting mental disorders, including schizophrenia, anxiety, depression, and suicide.5,6 Individuals with a family history of mental illness are at an even higher risk.7,8,9

**YOUR RECORD**

If you are under 21 and caught in possession of weed without a valid medical marijuana ID, you will face legal consequences, as will the person over 21 who supplied you with weed.

**WEED USE ISN’T THAT POPULAR**

In 2018, only about 1 in 5 high school students in Illinois reported using cannabis in the past 30 days.16

**DRIVING**

Cannabis can negatively affect the skills that are needed to drive safely, including reaction time, coordination and concentration, increasing the risk of getting into a car crash.10,11

For more about Illinois’ new cannabis law, check out The Laws on LetsTalkCannabisIL.com.

If you have additional questions regarding non-medical marijuana use in Illinois, please email letstalkcannabisIL@prevention.org.

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REFERENCES


