



HOW TO USE CANNABIS RESPONSIBLY

Consuming cannabis (marijuana, hashish, weed, pot, edibles, etc.) can be risky, depending on how you use and what you do afterward. If you decide to use, here is important information to keep yourself and others safe.

USE SPARINGLY

- **Cannabis is stronger than it used to be** because modern marijuana plants contain higher amounts of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). The higher the THC content, the stronger the effects on your brain and behavior.^{1,2,3}
- The effects of high concentrations of THC are not fully understood but can **impair your judgment and coordination, and lead to poisonings, car crashes, and other injuries**. It can also increase your risk for acute psychosis.^{4,5,6,7}
- **Everyone reacts differently to cannabis**. Factors include gender, previous experience, the method in which it is used, and the strength of the cannabis.⁸ Your experience may also be affected by body weight and whether or not there is food in your system.⁹
- **Even a single dose of THC can impair your ability to drive**, bike, or do other activities - especially if you are not a regular user.^{10,11}
- While a single dose of marijuana is considered to be approximately 10 mg of THC, **it is recommended that you start with less than 10 mg and wait** to see how it affects you before using more.^{12,13}

10mg

**EQUALS A SINGLE DOSE OF WEED,
REGARDLESS OF THE METHOD.**



GO SLOW WITH EDIBLES

- First-time and infrequent cannabis users may want to start with 5mg of THC (approximately half a dose) to gauge their reaction before using more.
- It takes the average person 30 minutes to feel anything at all and up to 2 hours to feel the full effect of one dose,^{9,14} so be mindful and pace your use to avoid becoming too high.
- Consuming too much too fast can put you at a high risk of getting too high and experiencing marijuana poisoning.¹⁵
- Grab a bite before taking edibles to better control your high,¹⁴ as consuming edibles on an empty stomach may result in a stronger high than you intend.
- Eating food after using cannabis can actually push more THC into your system, rather than softening the effects.



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KEEP CHILDREN & PETS SAFE

CANNABIS USE FOR ANYONE UNDER 21

Non-medical marijuana use is illegal for anyone under 21 years of age.

CANNABIS AFFECTS CHILDREN MORE STRONGLY THAN ADULTS¹⁶

Children who have accidentally eaten marijuana products have been sick enough to need emergency medical care.¹⁷

STORE ALL CANNABIS PRODUCTS IN ITS ORIGINAL CHILD-RESISTANT PACKAGING AND KEEP IN A HIDDEN, OUT-OF-REACH PLACE

If you think a child may have ingested cannabis, call the Poison Control Center at 800-222-1222 or 911 for immediate medical assistance.

NEVER USE CANNABIS AROUND CHILDREN, ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR WATCHING THEM

Secondhand cannabis smoke contains THC and other harmful chemicals found in tobacco smoke in the same quantities that can lead to a second-hand high and lung problems.^{18,19}

DON'T CONDONE TEEN CANNABIS USE

Using cannabis regularly in your teens and early 20s can physically change your brain and permanently harm your memory, learning, and attention.^{20,21}

REGULAR USE OF MARIJUANA IN YOUR TEENS AND EARLY 20s CAN PHYSICALLY ALTER YOUR BRAIN AND CAUSE PERMANENT HARM.



KEEP MARIJUANA PRODUCTS AWAY FROM PETS

Pet owners should treat cannabis, including cannabis-containing edibles, like prescription medications and keep them out of the reach of pets. Dogs are especially attracted to edibles that contain chocolate, and chocolate can be very dangerous to them. If you suspect your pet has ingested a cannabis-containing product, please contact your veterinarian immediately for advice on treatment.²²



DON'T DRIVE UNDER THE INFLUENCE

- Though you may think you're more alert while using cannabis, THC can impair your judgment, coordination, and reaction time, which can lead to car crashes.^{4,23}
- It is neither legal nor safe to use cannabis while operating any motorized vehicle (this includes boats and motorcycles).
- Driving high can result in a DUI and increase your risk of a car accident.



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KNOW THE HEALTH RISKS

- Routine marijuana users are significantly more likely than nonusers to develop long-lasting mental disorders, including schizophrenia, anxiety, depression, and suicide.^{24,25}
- Smoke from cannabis contains many of the same toxins and chemicals found in tobacco smoke in the same quantities,^{26,27} and inhaling it can increase your risk of developing lung problems.^{28,29}
- 1 in 10 marijuana users develop a cannabis use disorder, meaning they can't stop using the drug even though it interferes with their social life, career achievements, and physical and mental health.
- If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, or plan to become pregnant soon, leading doctors' organizations, like the American Academy of Pediatrics, recommend that you do not use cannabis as it can be dangerous to your baby's growth and development.^{31,32}

CHEMICALS FOUND IN CANNABIS SMOKE INCLUDE AMMONIA, HYDROCYANIC ACID, AND NITROSAMINES AS WELL AS MANY OF THE COMPONENTS OF TAR INCLUDING PHENOLS, NAPHTHALENE, AND THE PROCARCINOGENIC BENZOPYRENE AND BENZANTHRACENE³⁰



BE AWARE OF VAPING & CONCENTRATES

- Researchers do not fully understand how vaping can affect your health.³³
- Vaporized and concentrated waxes and oils can contain significantly more THC, which increases the risk of marijuana poisoning.¹⁵
- According to the CDC, among 1,184 patients with a vaping related illness, 83% reported using THC-containing products.³⁴
- The processes of heating vaping devices exposes users to carcinogenic chemicals like formaldehyde and toxic metals like lead that can cause brain damage.^{35,36,37,38,39}

DON'T USE SYNTHETIC CANNABINOIDS

- Synthetic cannabinoids (K2, spice, spike) are made from another type of plant (not cannabis) that's sprayed with chemicals.^{11,40}
- They are illegal,⁴¹ extremely dangerous, and have even killed people in Illinois.⁴²
- If someone you know has used synthetic cannabinoids and needs help:
 - Call the Poison Control Center at 800-222-1222
 - If the person stops breathing, collapses, or has a seizure, call 911

For more about the health risks of using cannabis while pregnant or breastfeeding, check out **Family Safety** on [LetsTalkCannabisIL.com](https://www.LetsTalkCannabisIL.com).

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



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