

What steps can you take to prevent marijuana use in your child? And why is this so important?

Marijuana is a hot topic of conversation in Portland, in Maine, and across the country—from marijuana as medicine to legalization as a recreational drug.

Regardless of where you stand on the issue, the one thing the pundits all agree on is that marijuana, like alcohol, prescription and illicit drugs should not be consumed by teens.



We need to remember, marijuana and other drugs affect teens' brains differently than adults. Studies have shown that while marijuana does not have the *same* addictive properties as alcohol or other drugs, ***it is still addictive.***

Both animal and human studies show physical and psychological withdrawal symptoms from marijuana, including irritability, restlessness, insomnia, nausea and intense dreams. Tolerance to marijuana also builds up rapidly. Heavy users need 8 times higher doses to get the same effects as infrequent users.ⁱ

There are also long term health consequences for chronic marijuana users:

- problems with memory recall
- increased risk mental illness
- fertility issues.ⁱⁱ
- While there are no studies directly linking marijuana smoke to cancer, there are studies which show marijuana smoke contains 50-70 percent more carcinogenic hydrocarbons than does tobacco smoke, as reported by the American Lung Association.ⁱⁱⁱ

So what can parents do to help their child avoid marijuana use?

For that, we can turn to what our students are telling us:

High school students who believe that marijuana is easy to get are 7x's as likely to use marijuana.

This makes us believe **that limiting access to marijuana** is an effective means of preventing youth from using marijuana.

- Know your child's friends and their parents.
- Does anyone in your child's life use marijuana medicinally?
 - If so, where do they smoke & do they lock up their marijuana?
- Does anyone in your child's life use marijuana recreationally?
 - If so, talk to your teen about the realistic risks and consequences
 - Is it possible to limit their exposure to their use?
- Does your teen have access to large amounts of cash?

High school students who don't believe their parents think it is wrong for them to use marijuana are 4x's as likely to use marijuana.

Clarify your *rules, expectations, and consequences* around marijuana use with your child. Take advantage of teaching moments to explain the risks, your concerns, and the purpose for your rules. Ideally you want them to understand you wish to keep them safe and for them to live healthy, productive lives.

Teens who believe there is little risk if they smoke marijuana regularly are 5x's more likely to use marijuana.

Share with youth the research and the facts on the risks of long-term marijuana use. Do they want to pursue a career that will depend on their ability to think clearly, quickly, and recall details? Do they value keeping their lungs healthy, or plan to have children? Is there a risk factor for mental illness in your family? If so, avoiding marijuana should be a priority.

As a parent, your advice and guidance is important to them, ***even if they don't show it.***

Teens who personally know adults who have gotten drunk or high are 3x's as likely to use marijuana.

Teens watch adults for cues on how to celebrate, relieve stress, deal with anger, or just relax.

For example, put exercise, meditation, gardening, good friends and conversation, or a good book high on the family values list as ways to unwind.

What are State and Federal laws governing marijuana?

Here's a snapshot:

(Keep in mind, these can potentially apply to juveniles under the age of 18!)

<u>Possession</u>	<u>Crime Type</u>	<u>Incarceration</u>	<u>Fine</u>
proof of physician's recommendation	None	None	none
under 2.5 oz	Civil Violation	None	\$350 – \$600 subsequent violation within 6 months \$550
2.5 oz. or more	Presumption of Sale	1 year	\$2,000

<u>Cultivation</u>	<u>Crime Type</u>	<u>Incarceration</u>	<u>Fine</u>
5 plants or less	Class E Misdemeanor	6 months	\$1,000
5 – 100 plants	Class D Misdemeanor	1 year	\$2,000
100 – 500 plants	Class C felony	5 years	\$5,000
More than 500 plants	Class B felony	10 years	\$20,000

<u>Sale</u>	<u>Crime Type</u>	<u>Incarceration</u>	<u>Fine</u>
1 lb. or less	Class D Misdemeanor	1 year	\$2,000
1 lb. – 20 lbs	Class C Felony	5 years	\$5,000
20 lbs. or more	Class B Felony	10 years	\$20,000
Sale to minor or within 1,000 feet of school or on school bus	Felony	5 years	\$5,000

<u>Miscellaneous</u>	<u>Crime Type</u>	<u>Incarceration</u>	<u>Fine</u>
Paraphernalia possession and use	Civil Violation	none	\$300
Paraphernalia sale	Misdemeanor	6 months	\$1,000
Paraphernalia sale to a minor	Misdemeanor	1 year	\$2,000

Other useful resources:

<http://maineparents.net/teenroom/index.htm>

This webpage helps you decode the signs of use by showing you a teen's room over run with drugs and paraphernalia. Includes definitions and explains ways youth may be concealing their use.

<http://www.drugfree.org/prevent>

This webpage helps you get the conversation started with your teen.

<http://learnaboutsam.com/>

This page offers more of a background on the legalization and medical marijuana issues in an open, smart way. Read up on your marijuana facts.

<http://www.maineparents.net/Monitoring/index.htm>

Useful prevention tips for all drug and alcohol use

ⁱhttp://brown.edu/Student_Services/Health_Services/Health_Education/alcohol_tobacco_&_other_drugs/marijuana.php#6 (last accessed on 1/31/2013)

ⁱⁱhttp://brown.edu/Student_Services/Health_Services/Health_Education/alcohol_tobacco_&_other_drugs/marijuana.php#6 (last accessed on 1/31/2013)

ⁱⁱⁱ Hoffman, D.; Brunnemann, K.D.; Gori, G.B.; and Wynder, E.E.L. On the carcinogenicity of marijuana smoke. In: V.C. Runeckles, ed., *Recent Advances in Phytochemistry*. New York: Plenum, 1975.