

In NYS, MARIJUANA is LEGAL

BUT did you know...

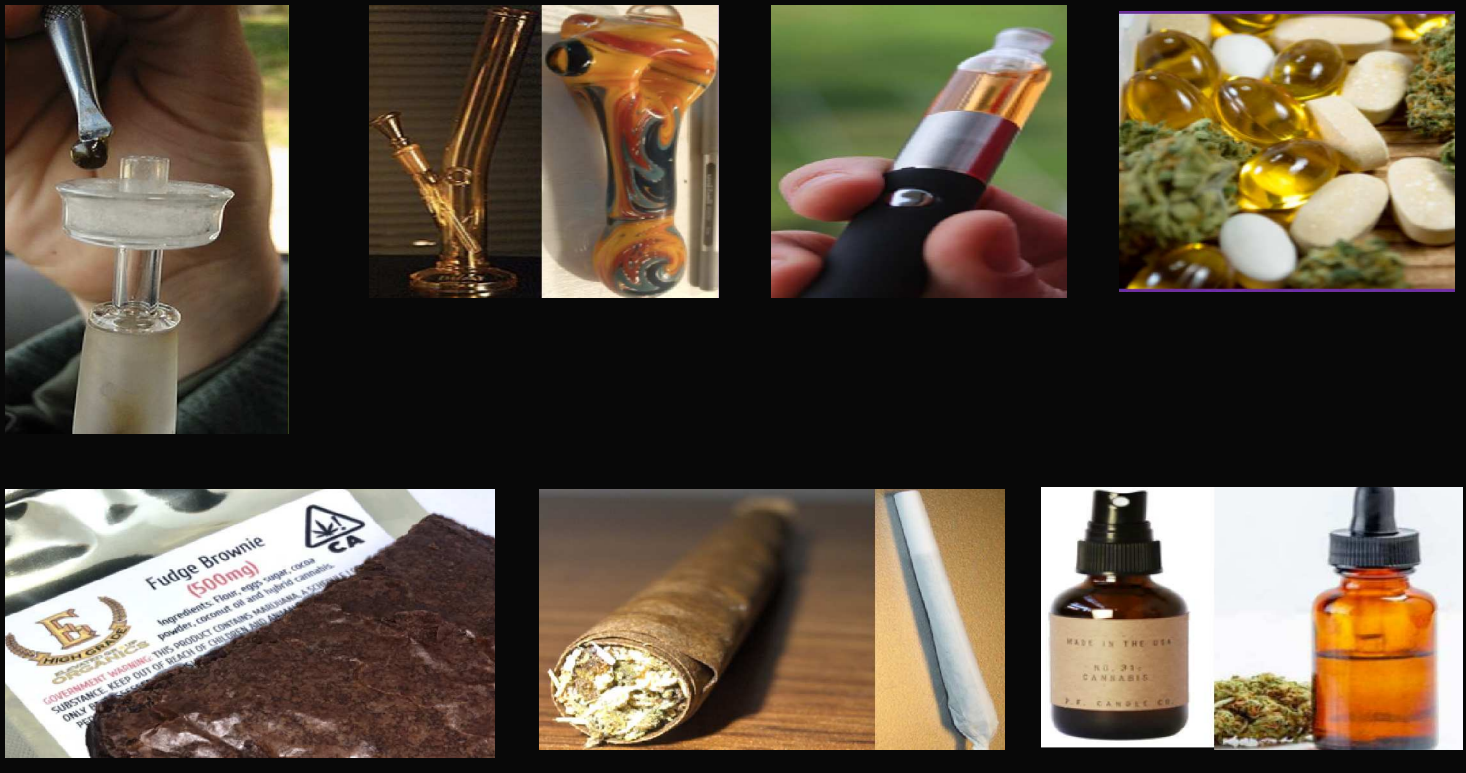
It is still against the law for anyone younger than 21 years old to possess, sell or use any amount of cannabis.

The marijuana sold today is very different from the marijuana that many of us grew up with. It poses a very real and significant danger to our children. It looks different, often has no distinctive smell and contains much higher doses of the active ingredient THC.

UNDERSTANDING CANNABIS IN 2022

- Cannabis (also known as marijuana) is the second-most commonly used recreational drug after alcohol. It can be smoked, vaped or ingested as a food or beverage (edibles).
- The cannabis plant contains hundreds of compounds, including THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol). THC is a psychoactive compound that makes people feel high.
- Concentrates, such as dabs, wax and oil, may have much higher amounts of THC – 40% to 90% – than other forms of cannabis, which are usually about 20% THC.
- A person's reaction to cannabis also may be affected by their age, height, weight, health status, medications taken, tolerance and what other food, liquids and drugs they have consumed that day.

WHAT DOES IT LOOKS LIKE?

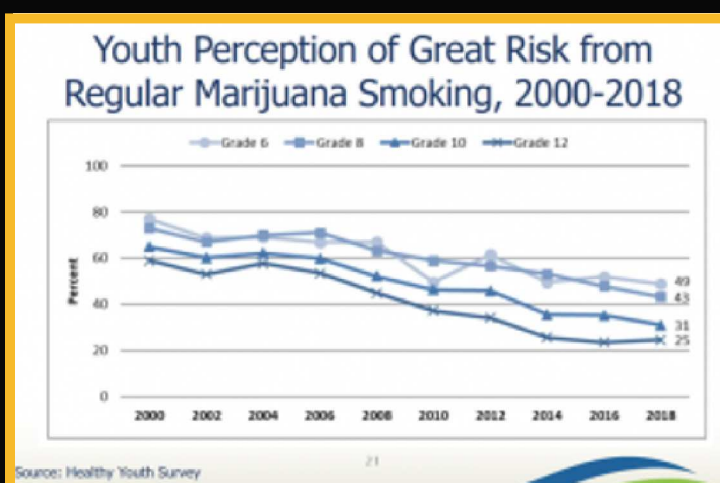


POTENCY OF MARIJUANA

- The potency of cannabis has grown dramatically over the past 15 years.
- The higher level of THC is associated with more negative outcomes and increase in addiction.
- These negative effects are especially worrisome in regard to the teenage brain.

PERCEPTION OF HARM AMONG YOUTH

Perception of harm has been steadily declining. This is further influenced by the legalization of recreational cannabis across the United States.



POINTS TO PONDER

- Although recreational cannabis is illegal in the United States for those under 21, it has become more accessible as many states have legalized it.
- In 1995, the average concentration of THC in cannabis samples seized by the Drug Enforcement Administration was about 4 percent. By 2017, it was 17 percent and now cannabis manufacturers are extracting THC to make oils; edibles; wax; sugar-size crystals; and glass-like products called "shatter" that advertise high THC levels in some cases exceeding 95 percent.
- Youths often do not realize the potency of what they are using. Because high THC products like dabs and waxes are derived from cannabis, they are often viewed as relatively safe by not only kids but parents as well. Higher doses of THC are more likely to produce anxiety, agitation, paranoia and psychosis.

NEW HEALTH CONCERNS WITH CANNABIS USE

Cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome is a condition that causes recurrent vomiting in heavy marijuana users.

- One study found that the risk of having a psychiatric disorder was five times higher among daily high potency marijuana users in Europe and Brazil than those who had never used it.
- Another study, published in 2021, reported that in 1995 only 2% of schizophrenia diagnoses in Denmark were associated with marijuana use but by 2010 had risen to 6 to 8 percent which researchers associated with an increase in use and potency of marijuana.
- A recent study found people who use marijuana had a greater likelihood of suicidal ideation, plan and attempt than those who do not use the drug at all.

REASONS TEENS USE MARIJUANA

The reasons for use are varied but some important ones to consider are:

- Curiosity
- Desire to fit in/belong
- Cope with anxiety and stress as well as depression
- Decrease in perception of danger of cannabis (related to legalization)
- Environmental factors including home, school and community

An additional reason for use is self-medication. This is important to consider since over the past several years, especially during the pandemic, there is an increase in adolescent mental health issues.

- More than 1 in 3 high school students had experienced persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness in 2019, a 40 percent increase since 2009.
- In 2019, approximately 1 in 6 youth reported making a suicide plan in the past year, a 44% increase since 2009. (CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2009-2019)

It is not uncommon for teenagers to use marijuana to self-medicate to cope with these stressors.

HOW TO HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH YOUR TEEN

- Check in frequently to see how they are doing.
- Choose informal times to talk - examples: riding in car, watching tv, eating dinner.
- Have a "side-by-side" conversation.
- Use open ended questions and be non-judgmental.
- Establish clear and consistent expectations about marijuana and other drug use.
- Let them know you care and are always available for them.
- Continue conversations even as your teen gets older.
- Share the consequences of marijuana use.