

# *Need to Know*

IF NOT FOR YOU — FOR A FRIEND

Wow, all this talk and action to legalize marijuana for medicinal and now, recreational purposes, has people wondering if it really is safe. As a teen, what you need to know is that it is NOT SAFE for you. The Academy of Pediatrics was not going to allow the use of marijuana for medicinal purposes for anyone under the age of 18 because of the harms it can cause to a developing brain (That is what you have, a brain still under construction. This is true regardless of how mature your body appears.) They have relented only for extreme medical conditions. And, where recreational use has been legalized, the legal age is 21 just as it is for alcohol and tobacco products, including the JUUL.

## What are the concerns?

- Marijuana use can disturb sleep cycles. Many find it hard to sleep and this leads to multiple problems.
- Longer lasting cognitive effects for a teen, potentially even irreversible. Effects that might last a few hours in an adult could last a week in an adolescent.
- Research suggests marijuana use during the teen years creates structural changes in two regions of the brain: Amygdala (Fundamental in processing emotions, memories and fear responses) and the Nucleus Accumbens (Core of motivation, pleasure and pain, and every decision you make).
- When regular use is initiated in the teen years, it can lead to an 8 point drop in IQ.
- Marijuana use during the teen years is strongly correlated with schizophrenia, anxiety and depression.
- Increased risk of addiction.

Overall, for now, it is not worth the risks. If after hearing all of this you are still curious what it is like, think to yourself, I can always try it when I turn 21.

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