

# Weed Can Wait

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

---

**Q** Why are you telling my kid to WAIT instead of NOT use marijuana?

**A** Your question makes a lot of sense. Our goal is to encourage kids to NOT use. The longer they wait, the more time their brains have to develop. Waiting means not using. Research also tells us that youth who wait are less likely to ever use or become dependent if they do try it as adults.

→ Source: Winters, K. C. & Lee, C.Y. S. Likelihood of developing an alcohol and cannabis use disorder during youth: Association with recent use and age. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*. 2008; 92, 239–247.)

**Q** Shouldn't we be telling youth NEVER to use marijuana?

**A** Every family handles conversations about legal substances like alcohol and marijuana differently. We learned from research on campaigns like DARE and "Just say NO" that young people will rebel against "NO" faster than anything. Youth who have ongoing conversations about not using with supportive and caring adults (like parents, teachers, and mentors) are less likely to use marijuana at younger ages. Connection is the best prevention – so the goal of this campaign is to get youth and parents talking.

→ Resource: [www.preventclarkcounty.org/cannabis-conversations](http://www.preventclarkcounty.org/cannabis-conversations)

**Q** Well, if marijuana is legal, why bother with prevention?

**A** It's legal for adults over 21. Youth brains are still developing well into the mid 20's. We know young brains are very sensitive to the effects of THC. There are also social and /or legal consequences like losing scholarships or financial aid for post-secondary schooling or getting arrested.

→ Source: [learnaboutmarijuanawa.org/Marijuana-Know-The-Facts.pdf](http://learnaboutmarijuanawa.org/Marijuana-Know-The-Facts.pdf) from WA State Cannabis and Liquor Control Board

**Q** Is marijuana THAT big of a deal? Aren't alcohol and cigarettes more dangerous and addictive?

**A** Teen brains are growing rapidly and important areas of the brain are very sensitive to the effects of all substances, including THC, the active chemical in marijuana and cannabis products. The THC in today's marijuana is much more concentrated, which means the teen brain can be affected more than ever. That can affect a young person's emotional regulation, decision-making, memory, coordination and other important "mental muscles" – for the rest of their lives. Using substances of any kind primes the brain for dependency and addiction.

→ Source: [learnaboutmarijuanawa.org/factsheets/potency.htm](http://learnaboutmarijuanawa.org/factsheets/potency.htm) from Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute at the University of WA

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONTINUED...

**Q** My doctor prescribed marijuana for a medical condition. Are you saying my medicine is bad?

**A** Questions regarding the potential medical benefits of marijuana should be addressed with a medical provider. Every person should work with their medical provider to address the potential risks and benefits of ALL medications, including proper storage and restricting access to children and youth. It's also important to secure all cannabis products and medication away from children.

**Q** As long as my teen stays home when they use marijuana, I don't think it's a big deal. Why not keep them safe if they are going to do it anyway?

**A** It is illegal for adults to provide marijuana to minors. It is also illegal for parents to provide marijuana to their children. We want parents to know the facts and that they can talk with youth about the real risks and why weed can wait. Most teens DON'T use and there are many ways to have fun or cope with stress. Weed doesn't have to be your teen's way. It's also important to remember that parents don't have to be anti-cannabis to support youth prevention.

→ Find out more at [youthnow.us](http://youthnow.us).

**Q** What does "delaying first use" mean?

**A** Delaying first use is one of many evidence-based strategies that work to help youth make healthy and safe choices. Delaying the point that a youth tries marijuana (or other substances) makes that youth less likely to ever use and less likely to become dependent or addicted. This approach is part of the strategies known as "harm reduction" and works well among some of our highest risk populations.

→ Source: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2528824/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2528824/) National Institutes of Health

**Q** I smoked pot as a teenager and turned out fine. Why all the judgmental propaganda?

**A** Every brain responds differently to different substances. Today's marijuana is 10-30 times stronger than the average weed of the 70s and 80s. There are also more options for ingesting higher quantities. Research has revealed more about how youth brains develop and how marijuana can affect the developing brain. All that tells us that for youth especially, Weed Can Wait.

→ Parents can find more info at <http://www.starttalkingnow.org/>

