

You've got better things to do than use weed

Really, you do.

And guess what? A lot of teens who get hooked say they wish they'd never started. **Weed takes up a lot of their time.** They smoke it instead of doing homework, playing sports or hanging out with their family and friends — the kind of friends you don't have to light up with to keep.

Teens smoke —and often eat— weed more and more because they get addicted. **At first, they think they're cool.** They think they're funny. They think they're really smart.

But soon, **they care more about weed than pretty much anything — and anyone — else.** Old best friends are lost to new "friends" who smoke weed. School, sports and family no longer seem important. The only thing that seems to matter is when they'll light up next.

They laugh at warnings like the one you're reading. They think they know better.

But here's what they're usually the last to know:

Marijuana messes with:

Your mind

The human brain doesn't fully develop until about **age 25**. If you start smoking weed while your brain is still maturing, you can **permanently damage your brain's wiring**. And some of the effects of brain damage won't surface until you're much older. Marijuana users harm their **memory, learning capacity** and ability to make decisions. Using weed makes you **less attentive** and **more impulsive**, which can lead to actions that further harm yourself and others. Marijuana use can result in **acute and chronic psychosis** — a condition that can cause hallucinations and delusions even long after you stop using the drug. Research shows marijuana use increases a person's chances of developing **schizophrenia** in early adulthood.

Your body

Marijuana is addictive, and smoking it at a young age increases your chances of **getting addicted**. Marijuana use is consistently one of the top reasons young people in Kansas get **addiction treatment**. A lot of teens have learned the hard way that using weed disrupts your **coordination and balance**. Use marijuana, and the likelihood of being in and being responsible for **car crashes** increases. There's also the risk of heart attack, which is **five times higher** in the hour after smoking weed. Marijuana smoke contains **50 to 70 percent** more cancer-causing agents than tobacco smoke and is linked to **respiratory problems** and different kinds of cancer. Use weed, and you'll be more likely to have risky sex, which can result in **sexually transmitted diseases** and **unplanned pregnancy**. Long-term marijuana use can harm your baby's development during pregnancy or **prevent you from having kids** at all.

Your future

Young people who smoke weed are more likely to **drop out of high school and/or college**. If you're caught using marijuana, you can lose your college scholarships and grants. Without an education, your **income will likely be less** than someone who has finished high school and/or college. If you smoke marijuana, you will be more likely to be **unemployed** or **welfare dependent**, and you'll have a greater chance of feeling **less satisfied with relationships and life** than people who don't smoke weed.

Learn more about these facts and other reasons why you've got better things to do than use weed at www.kansasfamily.com/MarijuanaToolkit

Marijuana: It's a Big Deal

When it comes to kids, marijuana is a **very big deal**. It is an addictive drug that is especially harmful to young people.

But guess where your child is most likely to get marijuana for the first time? **From someone they know**. It's going to be one of his or her friends. One of his or her family members. It might even be you.

Ignorance, ambivalence and indifference cost all of us—especially your family. Before deciding that smoking pot is no big deal, consider:

Marijuana today is up to **10 times more potent** than pot used in the '60s, '70s and '80s.

10
times

1 in 6 Today, **one in six** people under the age of 18 who tries marijuana becomes addicted to it. Children and adolescents are especially vulnerable to addiction because they are in the midst of crucial stages of brain development.

Reputable scientific studies have shown that marijuana is more addictive than alcohol. Marijuana, not alcohol, is the **number one reason** children and adolescents are admitted for substance-dependence treatment in Kansas and the United States.

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The three primary contributors to substance abuse and addiction in households and the larger community are:

- Accessibility of the substance
- Social acceptance of the substance's use
- The perceived risk of harmfulness

The more accessible and socially acceptable marijuana is in your child's world, the lower his or her understanding of its harmfulness will be. **That's usually when trouble starts.**

Since 2008, the number of 10th and 12th graders using marijuana in the last 30 days has **increased 20 percent**. The number of Kansas youth that have a close friend who uses marijuana has also **increased seven percent** in that time. Additionally, there has been a **52 percent increase** in the number of students who say there is no risk to using marijuana regularly.



Brought to you by Kansas Family Partnership, Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting positive youth behaviors through education, networking and advocacy. For details about this marijuana information and other facts about why it's a big deal, visit www.kansasfamily.com/MarijuanaToolkit or call **1-800-206-7231**.