



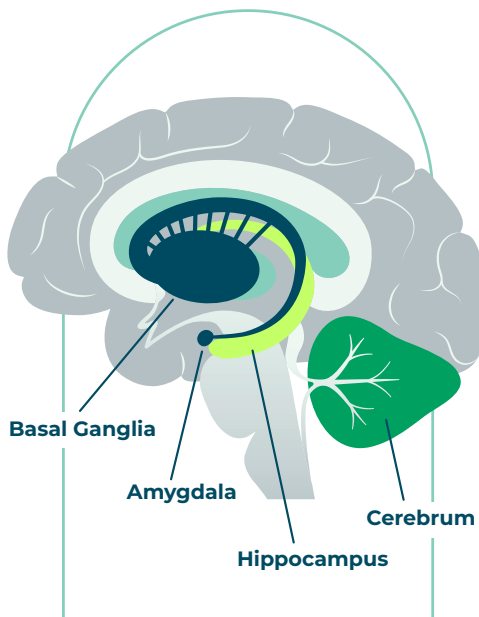
Cannabis Youth Facts



How can cannabis harm teen health?

The brain is still growing and fine-tuning connections until our mid-20s

When a teen uses cannabis, it can interfere with the way the brain develops. Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the active chemical in cannabis, enters the system that regulates body and brain functions. It overwhelms the brain and prevents it from doing its job, making it harder for teens to form memories, stay focused, manage stress, and more.



Sometimes the signs stay hidden, but you may notice a teen ...

- **Lacking motivation:** It might not be teen angst. THC can make kids act less like themselves because it reduces the chemicals in the **basal ganglia** that let us feel pleasure, satisfaction, and motivation.^{1, 2, 3, 4}
- **Forgetting the details:** Struggling to remember even the little things could be a sign of cannabis use. The teen brain is still growing, making it more susceptible to the effects of THC, which can disrupt how memories form in the **hippocampus** and cause forgetfulness.⁵
- **Getting off-balance:** Athletic or not, cannabis can mess with a teen's balance, coordination, and reaction time. THC can affect the **cerebellum**, where all of our motor functions are developed and managed.⁵
- **Feeling more stress:** Some teenage stress is normal, but cannabis use could be making it worse. That's because THC affects the **amygdala**, which can impact a teen's ability to manage their emotions and cause anxiety.⁶

Studies show that cannabis can harm teen mental health

From school to social media, kids often experience stress and anxiety on a regular basis. Using cannabis to self-medicate has become a common coping method. But the fact is, underage cannabis use is linked to negative mental health effects.



2x more likely to have depression: Using cannabis can increase a teen's chance of developing mental health challenges like depression, anxiety, and even thoughts of suicide.^{7,8,9}



Increased risk of psychosis: Youth who use cannabis, especially those who are genetically at risk, are more likely to experience temporary hallucinations and paranoia, as well as long-lasting disorders like schizophrenia.¹⁰



4-7x more likely to become dependent: Teens who start using cannabis before age 18 may find it difficult to quit later in life, even if they experience negative impacts from cannabis.¹¹

A simple conversation can help protect teens' health. Talk with kids and encourage them to [learn more about the risks](#) of underage cannabis use.



Sources

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