LET'S TALK CANNABIS

RESPONSIBLE USE OF CANNABIS FOR ADULTS

Decisions about how you use cannabis (marijuana, hashish, weed, pot, etc.) and what you choose to do afterward can make consumption risky. The information below can help you avoid harming yourself and others.

Be Safe

- Driving under the influence of cannabis is illegal and increases your risk of getting into a crash. It is also illegal to use cannabis as a passenger in an operating vehicle. [1, 2]
- If you smoke or vape cannabis you may feel the effects right away, but it can take between 30 minutes and two hours to feel the effects of edibles. Edibles may have higher concentrations of THC (tetrahydrocannabinol, the active ingredient in cannabis). If you eat too much too fast, you are at higher risk for poisoning. [3]
- Smoke from cannabis contains many of the same toxins and chemicals found in tobacco smoke and inhaling it can increase your risk of developing lung problems. [4, 5]
- If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, or plan to become pregnant soon, leading doctors' organizations recommend that you do not use cannabis. [6, 7]
- Young people who use cannabis regularly can harm their memory and ability to learn. There is also a greater risk for depression, anxiety, and schizophrenia. [8, 9, 10, 11]
- Protect your pets. Store cannabis safely out of reach of dogs, cats, and other animals. If you think your pet may have eaten cannabis, call your veterinarian. [12]

Keep Children Safe

- Cannabis affects children more strongly than adults. Children are at higher risk for poisoning from cannabis, especially with edibles. [13] Here are some safe practices you need to know.
  - Store all cannabis products in a locked area. Make sure children cannot see or reach the locked area.
  - Never use cannabis around children.
    - When you are using cannabis, make sure a sober adult who can look after your children is nearby.
  - Secondhand cannabis smoke contains THC and other chemicals that can affect the health of children. [14, 15]
  - If you think a child may have ingested cannabis, call the local Poison Control Center at 800-222-1222. If you think a child needs immediate medical help, call 9-1-1.

High THC Levels

- The way cannabis plants are grown has changed over the past few decades. Many plants now contain higher amounts of THC. The higher the THC content, the stronger the effects on your brain and behavior. [16, 17, 18]
- Higher levels of THC may result from newer methods of using cannabis like dabbing, vaping, and/or consuming edibles. [18]

- High concentrations of THC are not fully understood, but can impair your judgment and coordination, and lead to poisonings, car crashes and other injuries. It can also increase your risk for acute psychosis. [1, 19, 20, 21]

Everyone Reacts Differently

- You may react differently to cannabis than other people, depending on which method you use, how strong the cannabis is, your gender, and previous experience with cannabis or other drugs. [22]

- It may take time for the full effects of THC to be felt. If you don't feel it immediately, don't take more. Use caution as exact dosing amounts for cannabis are not always clear. [23, 24]

  - Even a single dose of THC may impair your ability to drive, bike or do other activities, especially if you are a new cannabis user or just use once in a while. [25, 26]

Vaping and Concentrates

- Researchers do not fully understand how using cannabis with vaporizers or using concentrated forms like waxes and oils affects your health. Here is what we do know. [27]

  - Vaporized and concentrated cannabis can have a lot more THC, which increases the risk of poisoning. [28]

  - The additives, tools, and high temperatures used for vaporizing cannabis may expose you to toxic substances, which may cause serious lung injury. [28]

Synthetic Cannabinoids

- Synthetic cannabinoids (K2, spice, spike) are not actually cannabis, but are made from another type of plant and sprayed with chemicals produced in a laboratory. All synthetic cannabinoids are illegal in Vermont. [26, 29]

- Synthetic cannabinoids affect your brain more powerfully than cannabis, and may result in nausea, anxiety, paranoia, brain swelling, seizures, hallucinations, aggression, heart palpitations or chest pains. [30, 31]

- If someone you know has used synthetic cannabinoids and needs help, take the following steps:

  - Call 9-1-1 immediately if the person stops breathing, collapses, or has a seizure. These symptoms can be life-threatening and require immediate medical attention.

  - Call your Poison Control Center at 800-222-1222.

Using cannabis can impair your judgment and coordination, and should only be used with caution. Do not operate a motor vehicle under the influence of cannabis. Cannabis use is prohibited for anyone under age 21 for a reason: cannabis can negatively impact brain development. THC concentrations in cannabis products may be very different and some levels of THC can cause more severe reactions. Learn more at healthvermont.gov/letstalkcannabis.

Under Vermont law, adults 21 or older can use, carry, and grow cannabis (marijuana, weed, pot, etc.), with important restrictions. Vermont Law, known as Act No. 86 (H.511): Eliminating Penalties for Possession of Limited Amounts of Marijuana by Adults 21 or Older took effect on July 1, 2018, and includes information about where you can use cannabis, how much you can possess, and the penalties for illegal use. Adults 21 or older are also permitted to purchase cannabis if they are registered medical marijuana patients or authorized caregivers. Only medical marijuana dispensaries registered with the Department of Public Safety may sell cannabis in Vermont. For more information, visit: https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2018/H.511

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