

TIPS FOR PARENTS

March 9, 2015

No matter their age, here are some steps to keep children safe around marijuana.

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE, EVEN IF THERE IS NO MARIJUANA IN MY HOME?

Talk to young children about not eating or drinking anything without permission. This is important for when they are at other people's homes.

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE IF I PLAN TO USE MARIJUANA?

Make sure there is another person who can safely care for children. It is not safe for anyone who is high to take care of children.

Do not allow smoking in your home or around children. Marijuana smoke is not healthy. It has many of the same cancer-causing chemicals as tobacco smoke.

Being high or even buzzed can make some activities more dangerous.

- Driving a car while high is not safe for the driver or passengers. Tell children and teens not to ride in a car if the driver is high.
- It is not safe for young children to sleep in bed with you, especially if you are high.

HOW CAN I STORE MARIJUANA SAFELY?

Store all marijuana products in a locked area. Make sure children cannot see or reach the locked area. Keep marijuana in the child-resistant packaging from the store.

How you store marijuana should change as children get older. Safe storage around young children may not stop older children or teens.

WHAT HAPPENS IF CHILDREN EAT OR DRINK MARIJUANA BY ACCIDENT?



Marijuana can make children very sick. Look for problems walking or sitting up, starting to be sleepy or having a hard time breathing.

If you are worried, call the poison control hotline as soon as possible. Calling is free and you will be helped quickly.

If symptoms seem bad, call 911 or go to an emergency room right away.

BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL FOR CHILDREN.

Set a good example and create a safe environment.

Actions speak louder than words. Do not use marijuana, alcohol or other substances around children.



NEED TIPS ANSWERING TOUGH QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR OWN USE?

VISIT:
[SPEAKNOW
COLORADO.ORG](http://SPEAKNOWCOLORADO.ORG).

TALK TO YOUTH ABOUT MARIJUANA TO HELP THEM BETTER UNDERSTAND THE RISKS

Listen carefully and stay positive. Keep the conversation open so they can come to you with questions. Knowing they can ask you questions helps youth make good decisions for their future.

What you talk about may depend on how old they are.

TALK ABOUT HOW MARIJUANA DAMAGES THEIR GROWING BRAINS

- Marijuana can make it harder to learn, sometimes weeks after quitting.
- Problems with learning increase as more marijuana is used.
- Youth who start using marijuana are more likely to become addicted in the future.

Encourage youth to protect their brains by not using marijuana.

TALK ABOUT HOW MARIJUANA CAN GET IN THE WAY OF THEIR GOALS

Ask about their dreams and help them connect with what they need to achieve them.

Be honest. Explain how doing well in school and staying out of trouble can help them reach their goals.

Talk about how marijuana can get youth in trouble:

- **Breaking family and community rules:** Set clear rules for youth. Share that younger siblings and neighbors see them as role models, so they should not use marijuana.
- **Breaking school or after school activity rules:** Youth may be referred for drug counseling, suspended, expelled or face prosecution.
- **Breaking Colorado laws:** Youth may get a Minor in Possession charge. This can lead to fines, public service, substance abuse education, loss of a driver's license and misdemeanor or felony charges.
- **Breaking federal laws:** Since marijuana is still illegal outside Colorado, youth with marijuana charges may not get financial aid to help pay for college.

Visit SpeakNowColorado.org for warning signs of high-risk behavior and useful talking tips to help youth make healthy choices.

RESOURCES:

- For more information on marijuana in Colorado, including laws, methods of use and health effects, visit Colorado.gov/Marijuana.
- For specific tips on age-appropriate ways to talk to youth, suggested talking points and how to spot high-risk behaviors, visit SpeakNowColorado.org.
- To access Colorado substance abuse treatment professionals, visit LinkingCare.org, or call 1-800-CHILDREN for additional resources.
- For more information on the laws and consequences for youth marijuana use, visit bit.ly/CDE_under21penalties.



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