

## WHAT TEENS SHOULD KNOW



Cannabis and cannabis products are only legal in New Jersey for those 21 years and older. The risk of developing a cannabis use disorder (CUD) increases for people who begin using cannabis before 18 years old.

Cannabis use can have short-term and long-term effects on kids and young adults, and its impact can differ from person to person.

## LEARN MORE



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page for more information.

## WHY TEENS SHOULD WAIT

- **Brain Development:** Smoking, vaping, or consuming cannabis products before the age of 25 can negatively impact memory and learning.
- **Academic Performance:** Regular cannabis use among young people is linked to lower academic performance, impaired learning abilities, and reduced educational attainment.
- **Cognitive Function:** Starting cannabis use early can affect attention, memory, and decision-making skills.
- **Mental Health Risks:** Using cannabis in adolescence may increase the risk of mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression, and psychosis, particularly in those predisposed to these conditions.
- **Long-term Adverse Effects:** Using cannabis too early can lead to cannabis use disorder (CUD) later in life, which includes withdrawal symptoms like decreased appetite, cravings, restlessness, irritability, mood changes, and sleep difficulties.



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**5 Reasons to Wait to Bake**



## TALKING TO TEENS ABOUT CANNABIS

[NJ.GOV/CANNABIS](https://nj.gov/cannabis)



Talking to teenagers and young adults about cannabis can be uncomfortable for some adults. But parents, guardians, teachers, and others must know how to create a safe and nonjudgemental environment that allows for transparent, two-way communication that leads to healthy choices. Some reports suggest that as many as a third of all teenagers try cannabis, and some experiment as early as in the fifth grade. The time to have the talk is **today!**

**Always lead with empathy. Sincerely acknowledge the pressures young people may deal with every day. Let them know THC can worsen mental health symptoms for some people and help them find healthy ways to manage.**

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## YOUR FIRST STEPS:

**Build Trust:** Teens are not kids, but they're not adults either. Tweens are still kids, but are pushing for independence. They all want to feel trusted and supported. The more you trust them, the more they will trust you and see you as a safe space to turn to.

**Be a Role Model:** Although they may seem uninterested in you, they are paying attention to what you do. If you use cannabis, buy from legal dispensaries, use responsibly, and store your products safely. If you are not a consumer, speak respectfully of other adults' choices and be open for curious tweens and teens to ask questions.

**Be Informed and Factual:** Learn about the different types of cannabis and their effects. THC can raise mental health risks, and early use increases the chance of cannabis use disorder. Products like Delta-8 THC - and other hemp-derived products - in convenience stores are unregulated and may harm your health. And remember, legal does not mean safe for everyone.

**Give Them Reasons Not to Start:** Children and young people may be tempted to use cannabis to fit in, experiment, relax, or combat boredom. To counter this, give them opportunities to engage in fulfilling and enjoyable activities, and to be positively influenced.



Talk to your kids and teens about Delta-8 THC. They may think it is safe because Delta-8 products can easily be found in convenience stores, smoke shops, and gas stations.

## FACTS ABOUT DELTA-8 THC

- Hemp-derived, low level psychoactive compound
- Unregulated by any state or federal agency to ensure safety, quality, efficacy, or label accuracy
- Not sold at licensed New Jersey cannabis dispensaries
- No real guidelines on packaging, lab synthesized additives, and other ingredient information
- FDA warns these products are unsafe in any context and present a public health risk.