

# Marijuana Fact Sheet for Community Members



## Is Marijuana Addictive?

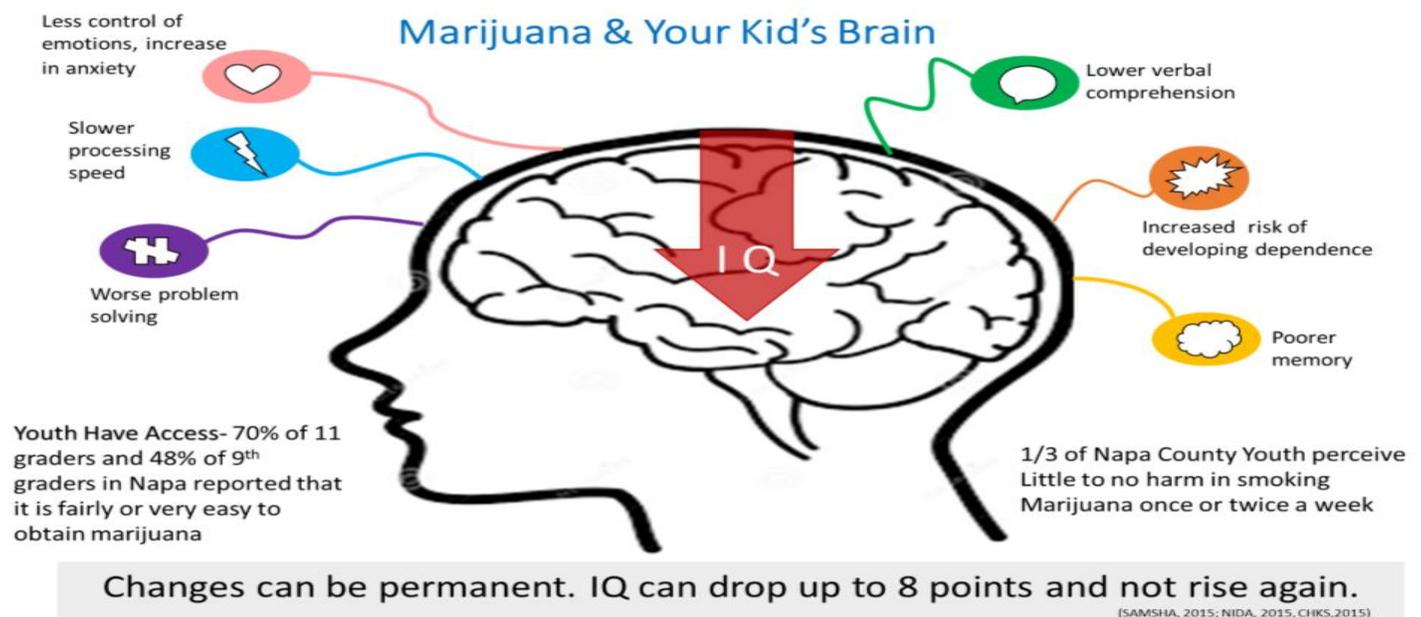
**Yes.** Recent evidence-based research says up to 30% of people who use marijuana have some degree of addiction or dependence to the drug. People who begin using marijuana before the age of 18 are 4 to 7 times more likely to develop a dependence than adults<sup>1</sup>. However, at least one-third of Napa County youth see “very little” to “no harm to them by smoking marijuana once or twice a week according to the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS)<sup>2</sup>.

## Marijuana comes in many forms.

Edible marijuana can take the form of gummy bears, sodas, cupcakes, sugary cereals, waxes, lollipops and more. These edibles are appealing to young people. In states where marijuana is legal, they have seen an alarming increase in the number of emergency room visits for children under the age of 5 being poisoned by these marijuana edible products. In addition, it is easy to conceal marijuana in these forms and can often be difficult for law enforcement and parents to detect if youth are using. “Dabs” and “honey oil” are becoming increasingly common and are more pure forms of marijuana that contain up to 95% THC<sup>3</sup>. These products can be easily concealed in vape pens and vape devices allowing youth to use with lower chance of “getting caught”.

## What effect does marijuana have on developing brains?

Short term use of marijuana among youth can include problems with memory and learning and an impaired ability to concentrate and retain information. Long term effects include a permanent decrease in IQ by the time they reach 30 years of age. In addition, research shows teens who use marijuana once a week over a two year period are almost six times more likely than teens who do not use marijuana to drop out of school, and over three times less likely to attend college<sup>1,3</sup>.



## Is it difficult to get marijuana?

**NO.** 70% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders and 48% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders in Napa County reported that it is “fairly easy” or “very easy” for youth to obtain marijuana<sup>2</sup>.

## Some states have legalized recreational marijuana, what are the current results they are seeing from legalization?

Rates of marijuana use in Colorado and Washington have increased, and both states reported that in 2016 legalization has had serious negative impacts on health and public safety<sup>5,6</sup>. Colorado reports that marijuana DUI cases have risen from 6.9% in 2006 to 19.3% in 2014, and that marijuana poisonings have risen sharply in both states<sup>5,6</sup>. For more information see below.

### What can St. Helena and Calistoga learn from the legalization of marijuana in Colorado and Washington State, and it's effects on youth?

#### Colorado

- Youth (12 to 17 year old) use of marijuana in the past month jumped from 4<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation to 1<sup>st</sup> in two years following legalization.<sup>4</sup>
- School counselors surveyed state that high school youth obtain marijuana from parents (20%), other family (25%) and friends who bought marijuana legally(2%).
- Arrests for marijuana use in Denver public schools increased by 6% between 2013-2014.<sup>5</sup>
- Colorado now reports that marijuana DUI cases have spiked from 6.9% in 2006 to 19.3% in 2014, and that marijuana poisonings have risen sharply in both states



#### in DUI's :

- **Short term use doubles the risk of being involved in a car accident.**<sup>7,9</sup>
- **If the driver is under the influence of alcohol and marijuana, their risk is 24 times that of a sober driver, compared to only being under the influence of alcohol, their risk of a fatal crash is 13 times higher.**<sup>7,9</sup>

#### Washington



- **Washington is in 6<sup>th</sup> place, and other states that have since legalized marijuana occupy 4<sup>th</sup> place (District of Columbia) and 5<sup>th</sup> place (Oregon).**
- **98% of students drug violations in Seattle Public Schools between September, 2013 and May, 2014 were due to marijuana.**
- **The percentage of total DUI/DRE cases tested positive for THC increase from 24% in 2013 to 28% in 2014 to 32% in 2015**

**Effects on Hospitals :**

- Poisoning is also due to selective breeding of the marijuana plant. Current strains have THC levels **14% higher** than that of 1960.<sup>5,7</sup>
- Calls related to marijuana edibles and other products infused with marijuana have taken a leap at the Washington Poison Center since legalization, especially related to youth. In 2014, youth under the age of 20 made up 45% of Washington Poison Center calls. The number of those calls has increased to 80% since legalization.<sup>8</sup>
- Marijuana related hospitalizations has risen an average of 30% per year since legalization for Colorado citizens.<sup>5</sup>



## What can I do to learn more and/or become involved in youth prevention activities?

- **Join in the discussion-** with UpValley Partnership for Youth on Facebook and get more information; participate in our monthly coalition meetings, attend local city council meetings and make your voice heard on the topic
- **Talk to your child or youth in your life about the risks of drug and alcohol use**
- **LEARN-** what other communities in California are doing to prevent/minimize the harms of legalized marijuana.
- Search online for **Vallejo's Community Change Coalition** and **Ventura County Behavioral Health, Alcohol and Drug Programs**. Here are some of their reports:
  - Medical Marijuana in California: An Analysis of the 2015 Legislation
  - Protecting Our Youth, Options for Marijuana Regulation in California

#### Sources:

1. National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) Research Report Series: Marijuana Abuse (2012). Fergusson, D.M., et al. (2003). Cannabis and Educational Achievements. *Addiction*, 98(12).
2. 2014, California Healthy Kids Survey
3. Hasin D. S., Saha, T. D., Kerridge, B. T., et al. Prevalence of Marijuana Use Disorders in the United States Between 2001-2002 and 2012-2013. *JAMA Psychiatry*. 2015;72(12):1235-1242. doi:10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2015.1858.
4. Meier, M., Capi, A., Ambler, A., Harrington, H., et.al. (2012). Persistent cannabis users show neuropsychological decline from childhood to midlife.
5. Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area. ( 2016, January 1). The Legalization of Marijuana: The Impact.
6. Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM): Lessons After Three Years of Marijuana Legalization. (February 17, 2016).