

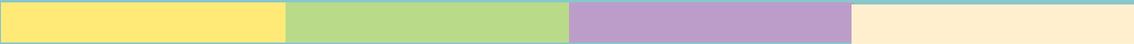


# MARIJUANA AND E-CIGARETTES:

Facts teens can use to make healthy choices

Over the past couple of decades, many states have changed laws and policies related to marijuana and e-cigarettes. In Washington, a large majority of public high school teens who were surveyed reported not using marijuana and e-cigarettes in 2014. However, increasing 12th grade use and an expanding retail market suggest that it is important for communities to support all youth to not use these products at a time when the law is new and may be confusing.

This publication will share information about marijuana and e-cigarette laws in Washington state, including that it is illegal for those who are under 21 years old to use retail marijuana. This special edition will also cover health effects of marijuana use by youth, potential consequences, media influences and other important information. It will also address e-cigarettes.



**1998**

In Washington state, voters passed initiative 692 to permit "medicinal use" of marijuana.

**2012**

In November, Washington state voters passed Initiative 502, which included licensing and regulating marijuana production, distribution and possession; removed state-law criminal and civil penalties for adults; added taxes for marijuana sales; and earmarked marijuana-related revenues.

**2014**

According to the 2014 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey, four out of five 10th grade students surveyed in Washington state public schools reported that they did not use marijuana in the past 30 days. However, overall, a quarter of high school students surveyed reported using marijuana in the past 30 days, and 12th grade use is increasing. Peers can help each other, in getting support to be true to oneself and rise above the influence of drugs.

**2016**

A new law passed the Washington State Legislature that makes changes in the regulation of e-cigarettes and vapor products.



King County

Department of  
Community and Human  
Services Behavioral  
Health and Recovery

Public Health  
Seattle & King County



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# MARIJUANA AND E-CIGARETTES: FACTS TEENS CAN USE TO MAKE HEALTHY CHOICES

## Possible negative health effects of marijuana use

What's the possible health risk when it comes to marijuana use? Compared to tobacco, relatively few scientific studies have been conducted on marijuana. But it's clear that marijuana, like all drugs, has potential risks.

Here's what experts are concerned about: in people up to age 25 who regularly use marijuana, there may be long-lasting brain development impacts. For example, some studies have found a possible decline in IQ among adolescent marijuana<sup>1,2</sup> users as well as problems with memory, learning and attention, and school completion. Other studies have shown that teens who use marijuana regularly are at higher risk of developing depression. There is also evidence showing that marijuana use by teens may have a slightly increased risk of developing schizophrenia.<sup>3</sup>

Marijuana smokers tend to inhale smoke more deeply and hold their breath, which leads to greater exposure. Heavy smoking of marijuana by anyone can cause a chronic cough, excess phlegm, wheezing and bronchitis (inflammation of the airways). Marijuana smoke contains many of the same chemicals as cigarette tobacco smoke.

Marijuana smoking poses a threat to those with weakened immune systems. Aspergillus is a mold that can cause serious lung disorders and can grow on marijuana, which if then smoked exposes the lungs to this fungus. The risk of Aspergillus infection rarely occurs in people with healthy immune systems.<sup>4</sup>

Studies suggest that the younger a person starts using marijuana regularly, the more likely they are to develop a substance use disorder. It is estimated that about 1 in 10 people who use marijuana will become dependent on the drug. The more frequently individuals use marijuana, the more likely they are to become dependent.

Marijuana affects the brain's "reward center" in the same way as many other drugs.<sup>5</sup> Some studies have shown that regular marijuana users experience withdrawal symptoms for several weeks after they stop using. Withdrawal symptoms can include anxiety, restlessness, decreased appetite, irritability and trouble sleeping.

Recently, concerns have been raised about pesticides used in marijuana cultivation, and their potential impact on health. There's no way to tell if the marijuana has pesticide residue just by looking at it, and the health risks associated with inhaling pesticides through smoking have not been adequately studied.<sup>6</sup>

In Washington, calls to the Washington Poison Control Center spiked after the drug became legal in marijuana retail stores. Several high profile teen deaths have occurred in Washington in the past few years where marijuana was a factor, including vehicle crashes and falls.

There is still a lot to learn about the health impacts of marijuana. Visit Public Health's marijuana and health page to learn more at [www.kingcounty.gov/health/marijuana](http://www.kingcounty.gov/health/marijuana).

## What is marijuana?

Marijuana—also called weed, herb, pot, grass, bud, ganja, Mary Jane and other slang terms—is a greenish-gray mixture of the dried, shredded leaves and flowers of *Cannabis sativa*—the hemp plant.

The main psychoactive (mind-altering) chemical in marijuana, responsible for most of the intoxicating effects sought by retail marijuana users, is delta-9-tetrahydro-cannabinol (THC). The chemical is found in resin produced by the leaves and buds primarily of the female cannabis plant. The plant also contains more than 500 other chemicals, including over 100 compounds that are chemically related to THC, called cannabinoids.<sup>7</sup>

## How people commonly use marijuana

### Smoke

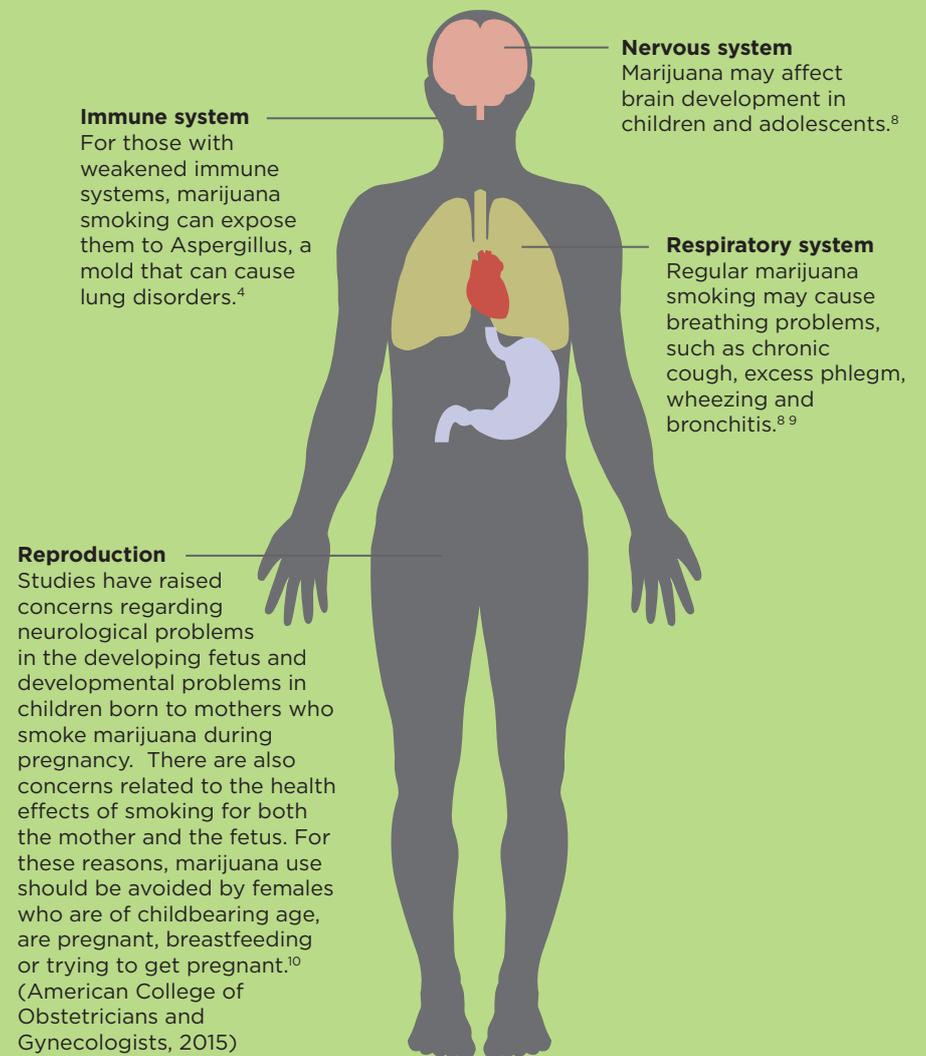
Smoking marijuana is the most common method of marijuana consumption. Inhaling smoke and plant particles into your system creates inherent risks (this is why firefighters wear masks). Additionally, other harmful chemicals can exist in the smoke or even in the product itself.

### Edibles

Edible marijuana products include candy, baked goods and teas that are infused with THC. It is illegal under our state's law for retailers to sell marijuana products that are 'appealing to youth.' They are usually stronger than the marijuana that people smoke, and users may not feel the full effects for hours, thinking that they need more to get high.

Eating too much can result in paranoia and anxiety—some people feel so sick that they

Although most drugs, including many over-the-counter medications, have benefits, they also have potential side effects and health risks. Marijuana products may contain unknown and possibly harmful ingredients. Effects depend upon what age you are when you start using marijuana, how often you use and how much you use. There may also be more adverse effects from combining marijuana with other drugs, including alcohol.



go to the emergency room (ER).

### Vape

Vaping or e-devices heat a liquid solution to produce vapor. Vaping devices are used both for marijuana and nicotine (the product that is in cigarettes). Research about vaping is still new and in 2016, the US Food and Drug Administration recently passed rules to regulate their sale and use.

*Vaping marijuana:* The health effects of vaping marijuana are unclear. Vaping might decrease the amount of irritation to the lungs; however, THC concentrations in the oil or marijuana used for vaping may be stronger and harder on the body than marijuana smoke. Additionally, cheap vaping devices have been known to be less effective at keeping harmful chemicals out of the smoke, or even to explode in people's faces, creating horrific injuries and disfigurement.

<sup>1</sup> Meier MH, Caspi A, Ambler A, et al. Persistent cannabis users show neuropsychological decline from childhood to midlife. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA* 2012;109:E2657-64. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1206820109> 10.1073/pnas.1206820109 - See more at: <http://ada.washington.edu/marijuana/factsheets/adolescents.htm> | "sthshash.auR9tOY.dpuf" <http://ada.washington.edu/marijuana/factsheets/adolescents.htm#sthshash.auR9tOY.dpuf>

<sup>2</sup> Adolescents and Marijuana. Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute, University of Washington. <http://ada.washington.edu/marijuana/factsheets/adolescents.htm> Accessed May 17, 2016

<sup>3</sup> Mental Health and marijuana. Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute, University of Washington. [www.learnaboutmarijuana.org/factsheets/mentalhealth.htm](http://www.learnaboutmarijuana.org/factsheets/mentalhealth.htm). Accessed on May 17, 2016

<sup>4</sup> M. Szyper-Kravitz, R. Lang, Y. Manor & M. Lahav (2001) Early Invasive Pulmonary Aspergillosis in a Leukemia Patient Linked to Aspergillus Contaminated Marijuana Smoking, *Leukemia & Lymphoma*, 42:6, 1433-1437

<sup>5</sup> Marijuana's Addictive Potential (for the general public) California Society of Addiction Medicine. [www.csam-asam.org/marijuanas-addictive-potential-general-public](http://www.csam-asam.org/marijuanas-addictive-potential-general-public). Accessed May 17, 2016

Harborview Medical Center treated four victims of exploding cigarettes from October 2015 to February 2016. These include a 24-year old man from Cashmere, Washington who injured his hand and arm, then was rushed to Seattle where he underwent five surgeries (<http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/exploding-e-cigarettes-send-vapers-to-harborview-with-gruesome-injuries/>)



## Vaping nicotine

Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) are used to vape nicotine. ENDS are known by many names, the most popular being e-cigarettes but also, vape pens, vape pipes, vaporizers, e-devices, e-pens, e-hookahs and hookah pens. E-devices heat a liquid solution to produce vapor. ENDS contain nicotine, which is fast acting, highly addictive and the same harmful drug that is in regular cigarettes and other tobacco products. For the second year in a row in the U.S., e-cigarettes are now used more than regular cigarettes by youth – both middle and high school students.

- The percent of 10th-graders in Washington state who used an e-cigarette in the past 30 days increased from about 4 percent in 2012 to 18 percent in 2014 (Healthy Youth Survey). Eighty-two percent of 10th graders, however, reported not using e-cigarettes in 2014.
- E-cigarettes may appeal to children and teens because of their high-tech design, easy availability online or in mall kiosks, and variety of flavor options. Marketers make these devices seem like they are hip and new. In reality, the marketing companies are often the same companies that marketed cigarettes to kids for years, seeking to ensure a continuous market of adults addicted to their products.
- It is illegal to sell an e-cigarette to anyone under 18 years of age in Washington. However, the online availability of e-cigarettes makes it difficult to enforce this law. As of May 5, 2016, the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) passed a rule that allows e-cigarettes to be regulated like tobacco products—in effect this allows the FDA to restrict the sale to minors, have oversight authority on what goes into e-cigarettes and monitor marketing and import of the product. However, the FDA will NOT be limiting the flavoring of e-cigarettes, which is a primary draw for youth.
- E-cigarettes have been marketed just the way traditional cigarettes were. For example, e-cigarette marketing has specifically targeted youth with celebrity endorsements and flavors like cotton candy and gumballs. Tobacco control advocates worked to expose these similar strategies for cigarettes and ban use of gimmicks like Joe Camel because they were specifically aimed at getting kids to start using tobacco.<sup>10</sup>
- Teens view e-cigarettes as safer and more socially acceptable than regular cigarettes. Teens also say that the main reason they use e-cigarettes is to be able to smoke in areas where smoking is prohibited without getting caught. Unfortunately, the jury is still out about whether e-cigarettes are actually safe, and most places that prohibit smoking also prohibit using e-devices.
- E-cigarette fluid contains fewer chemicals than traditional cigarettes, however they emit more than water vapor. E-cigarette devices have carcinogenic heavy metals and toxins, in addition to nicotine. E-cigarettes are not risk free.

- Secondhand vapor from e-cigarettes may also be unsafe. However, the quantity of these harmful compounds is often less than what is found in conventional cigarette smoke.<sup>12</sup>
- E-cigarettes have not been proven safe or effective by the FDA as a “quit smoking aid” (cessation device) and it is not known whether e-cigarettes can effectively help people quit or reduce tobacco smoking. For people who want to quit smoking, counseling combined with nicotine replacement gum, patch or medication, or traditional methods such as acupuncture can be effective. For free help to quit tobacco, call 800.QUIT.NOW (800.784.8669).
- Using e-cigarettes as a teen has been associated with a higher likelihood of beginning to use conventional cigarettes, even among those teens who never intended to smoke regular cigarettes, making e-cigarettes a potential gateway drug.
- Nicotine is a chemical that is especially toxic in liquid form. Liquid nicotine (or “e-juice”) refills pose a particular risk to children and teens.

## Tips to prevent e-cigarette poisoning

- Store e-cigarettes and refill products where children cannot see or reach them; in a locked location is best.
- Use and refill alone. Do not use e-cigarettes around children. Because children want to imitate adults, using e-cigarettes and refilling them with children nearby could lead to dangerous exposure.
- Store the national Poison Help Line number (1.800.222.1222) in your cell phone and post it near any home phones. Call it in case of accidental exposure.<sup>13</sup>

## Hookahs

Hookahs—sometimes called water pipes—are used to smoke specially made tobacco. The tobacco, often called shisha, comes in flavors such as cherry and bubble gum, that may appeal to youth and other people who may not usually consider using tobacco. Hookahs originated in ancient Persia and India and have been used for centuries. While hookah smokers may consider this practice less harmful than smoking cigarettes, no tobacco product is safe. Water pipe smoking delivers the addictive drug nicotine, and hookah smokers may absorb higher concentrations of the toxins found in cigarette smoke. A typical hour-long hookah smoking session involves inhaling 100–200 times the volume of smoke inhaled from a single cigarette. Hookahs are also used to smoke marijuana.<sup>14</sup>

## What about “synthetic marijuana?”

Synthetic cannabinoids, also known as “Spice,” “K2,” or a number of various other names, refer to a growing number of man-made, mind-altering chemicals typically sprayed on dried, shredded plant material. They are sometimes misleadingly called “synthetic marijuana” (or “fake weed”) because they act on the same brain cell receptors as delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol, THC, the mind-altering ingredient in marijuana.

Synthetic marijuana have increased, largely because some people mistakenly believe that it is “natural” or “safe,” and until recently, a legal alternative to pot. However, this very unnatural class of marketed designer chemicals can be dangerous. Thousands of teens and young adults in the U.S., a large majority of whom are male, end up in the ER with severe symptoms that may include vomiting, racing heartbeat, elevated blood pressure, seizures or hallucinations. Recently, a teen went into a coma and died from using Spice.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Marijuana and health. Public Health – Seattle & King County. [www.kingcounty.gov/health/marijuana](http://www.kingcounty.gov/health/marijuana). Accessed May 17, 2016

<sup>7</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse, Marijuana Research Report Series, What is marijuana. [www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana/what-marijuana](http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana/what-marijuana). Accessed May 19, 2016

<sup>8</sup> Marijuana and health: A comprehensive review of 20 years of research. KK Repp, PhD, MPH and AL Raich, MS, MPH, October 20, 2014. Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute, University of Washington. [http://learnaboutmarijuana.org/Reports/Marijuana\\_review\\_ReppRaich\\_Oct2014.pdf](http://learnaboutmarijuana.org/Reports/Marijuana_review_ReppRaich_Oct2014.pdf). Accessed May 19, 2016

<sup>9</sup> Respiratory Effects of Marijuana. Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute, University of Washington. Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute, University of Washington. Accessed May 19, 2016

<sup>10</sup> Marijuana, Reproduction, and Pregnancy. Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute, University of Washington. [www.learnaboutmarijuana.org/factsheets/reproduction.htm](http://www.learnaboutmarijuana.org/factsheets/reproduction.htm). Accessed May 17, 2016

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/1997/07/11/business/joe-camel-a-giant-in-tobacco-marketing-is-dead-t-23.html?pagewanted=all>

<sup>12</sup> Goniewicz, M. et al. (2013). Levels of selected carcinogens and toxicants in vapour from electronic cigarettes. *Tob. Control.* 1:1-8. Available at: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23467656](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23467656)

<sup>13</sup> Center for Injury Research and Policy at Nationwide Children’s Hospital

<sup>14</sup> World Health Organization. Tobacco Regulation Advisory Note. Water Pipe Tobacco Smoking: Health Effects, Research Needs and Recommended Actions by Regulators. (PDF–550 KB) Geneva: World Health Organization, Tobacco Free Initiative, 2005

<sup>15</sup> <http://q13fox.com/2014/08/09/teen-dies-after-smoking-smoking-synthetic-marijuana-parents-warnothers/>

# MARIJUANA AND E-CIGARETTES: FACTS TEENS CAN USE TO MAKE HEALTHY CHOICES

## How well do you know the laws?

1. What is the legal age for people to be able to use retail marijuana in Washington state?  
a. 18                      c. 20  
b. 19                      d. 21
2. What is the legal age for people to be able to buy retail marijuana in Washington state?  
a. 18                      c. 20  
b. 19                      d. 21
3. Is it legal for marijuana advertisers to have advertisements (signs, billboards, etc.) within 1000 feet of your school (about the length of 3 football fields away)?  
a. Yes                      b. No
4. If I am 18, can I go into a marijuana store with my older friend, sibling or parents?  
a. Yes                      b. No
5. I see a lot of people smoking marijuana and eating marijuana “edibles” around my school/neighborhood. Is it legal to do this?  
a. Yes                      b. No
6. If I am under 21, can I use a vaping pen to consume marijuana? Is this legal?  
a. Yes                      b. No
7. I know marijuana edibles might give someone a delayed high. Can I drive before the pot takes effect?  
a. Yes                      b. No
8. My friend sells marijuana. What are some possible risks if she gets caught? Circle all that apply.  
a. No risks since marijuana is legal in Washington state  
b. Monetary fine  
c. Jail time  
d. Loss of driver’s license
9. A senior at my school is hosting a party, along with his parents, and they are planning to serve marijuana. Can the parents do that?  
a. Yes, it is their private home  
b. No, this is not acceptable nor legal
10. Can I get kicked out of school for using marijuana, even once?  
a. Yes                      b. No
11. Is smoking/using marijuana really harmful?  
a. Yes                      b. No
12. What is the legal age for people to be able to buy e-cigarettes in Washington state?  
a. 18                      c. 20  
b. 19                      d. 21
13. True or False? E-cigarettes are safer than regular cigarettes.  
a. True                      b. False

**Answers** (Please note: The answers provide are not intended to constitute legal advice. You are encouraged to research the laws or consult an attorney.)

1. d. The legal age for people to be able to use marijuana in Washington state is 21, same as alcohol (RCW 69.50.4013(4)). There are specific exceptions for people with medical conditions identified in Washington law, who have a legal medical card.
2. d. Individuals who are 21 years of age or older may purchase marijuana in Washington state in a retail store. Sale by anyone outside of these stores is still illegal (RCW 69.50.401(1); RCW 69.50.4013(3)(a), (4); RCW 69.50.354).
3. b. No. This is a violation of the state’s rules, not only for advertisements within 1000 feet of schools, but also child care centers, playgrounds and other types of locations where youth are present (WAC 314-5-155). Marijuana is big business. Check out the rules for advertising here: [www.liq.wa.gov/mj2015/faq\\_i502\\_advertising](http://www.liq.wa.gov/mj2015/faq_i502_advertising).
4. b. People under 21 cannot go into a retail marijuana store (unless they have a medical card (RCW 69.50.357(2))).
5. b. It’s not legal to consume marijuana products in view of the public and it is never legal for those under 21 use/consume retail marijuana, whether smoked products, vaped products, or edibles (RCW 69.50.445(1)).
6. b. Any type of marijuana is illegal for people under 21 to possess or consume unless they have a medical card (RCW 69.50.4013(4)).
7. b. It is illegal for any person to drive in the state of Washington with a THC concentration of 5.00 or higher within two hours of driving (RCW 46.61.502(1)(b)). It is also illegal to drive while “under the influence” of a controlled substance (RCW 46.61.502 (c ), combination thereof at (d)), or any combination of controlled substances. Any level of THC can be used as evidence of impaired driving. It is a misdemeanor for a minor to drive with more than 0.00, an offense that is called “driver under twenty-one consuming alcohol or marijuana.” Different bodies react differently to THC, and products are not all uniformly made (some products may have higher THC than their label indicates). So driving by anyone after using is neither safe nor legal, and if you kill or hurt someone, Vehicular Homicide (RCW 46.61.520(1)(a) penalty at (2)) is a class A felony (up to life in prison and a \$50,000 fine), and Vehicular Assault is a class B felony (up to 10 years in prison and a \$20,000 fine.). Youth who drive under the influence of any drug, including alcohol or marijuana (RCW 46.61.503(b)(ii)), risk hurting themselves and others, and facing the following:
  - Losing their driver’s license for up to 2 years (1 year or until the person reaches 17 years old for the first offense; or up to age 18 or 1 year for the second offense);
  - Being convicted of a gross misdemeanor or felony depending on the circumstances (with possible jail time, fine and felony on your record that can affect college financial aid and job applications).
8. b. c. and d. Teens can be convicted of a Class C felony for selling marijuana (RCW 69.50.401(2)(c)) and can face possible jail time, fine and felony on your record that can affect college financial aid and job applications. Selling marijuana is a serious offense. It is illegal for anyone to sell marijuana unless they have a retail marijuana store business license. Shutting down the illegal market so that people don’t get hurt in the drug trade (all along the supply chain) is one reason that marijuana is legal for adults to buy from licensed stores in Washington. Some schools’ athletic policies ban kids from participating on teams or competing if they are caught using or selling drugs, including marijuana.
9. b. It is illegal to serve marijuana (or alcohol) to minors (RCW 69.50.401). It is a felony to provide marijuana to minors. Using at private parties is not legal for teens since teens are not legally allowed to use. Research shows that kids are less likely to use marijuana who believe that their parents think that its wrong for them to use it.
10. a. Yes. Some schools have zero-tolerance policies for marijuana and other drugs. If you are using frequently, you may be dependent upon marijuana. Some schools also have referral programs to help teens get help. Check with your school health center or guidance counselor, or connect with the Teen Link for confidential help so you don’t face an unwanted consequence. Contact Teen Link at **1-866-TEENLINK** (1-866-833-6546), <http://866teenlink.org> (also see resource list on last page).
11. a. Marijuana can affect learning and memory and cause distorted perception, difficulty in thinking, problem-solving, and coordination.
12. a. The legal age to purchase e-cigarettes (without marijuana) in Washington state is 18 years of age or older (RCW 26.28.080).
13. Gotcha! We don’t know if they are or not and neither do the e-cigarette marketers—no one does.



### Perceptions and the truth

Did you know the average youth spends 6.5 hours interacting with media everyday?<sup>16</sup> The media knows this and they use it to their advantage.

A new study in *The Journal of Pediatrics* reported that students who viewed e-cigarette ads were more likely to use these devices. Specifically, an analysis of data from the 2014 National Youth Tobacco Survey showed that high school students who routinely saw e-cigarette ads online were 71 percent more likely to use the devices than their peers who never saw those ads. Similarly, high school students who viewed e-cigarette ads on TV and in the movies were 54 percent more likely to use e-cigarettes compared to other teens who did not view these ads. Have you seen e-cigarette or marijuana ads?

Advertisers have begun to experiment with new techniques. One such technique is stealth advertising, in which marketers attempt to make an ad look like, well, not an ad. The theory behind the new technique is that advertising is most effective when consumers do not recognize it as advertising. If consumers let their guard down, they will be more open to persuasive arguments about the product. Using this approach, marketers try to blur the line between the advertisement and the content. Stealth advertising is allowed only in media like online venues, where it might appear in forms such as “advergaming” or online viral video content. Keep your eye open for subtle advertising of e-cigarettes or marijuana.

Although a large majority of Washington state teens do not use e-cigarettes or marijuana, the perception among many teens is that most do. Humans are social creatures and tend to behave in the way they perceive the majority of their peers behaving, and teens are no exception. However, perceptions are often wrong, and can lead teens to think something like using marijuana is more common than it really is. Sometimes stories that capture the most attention may involve “smoking a ton of weed,” or “drinking so much they threw up.” This tendency to retell only the most extreme stories has the unintended consequence of distorting what teens believe is “normal” behavior among their peers.

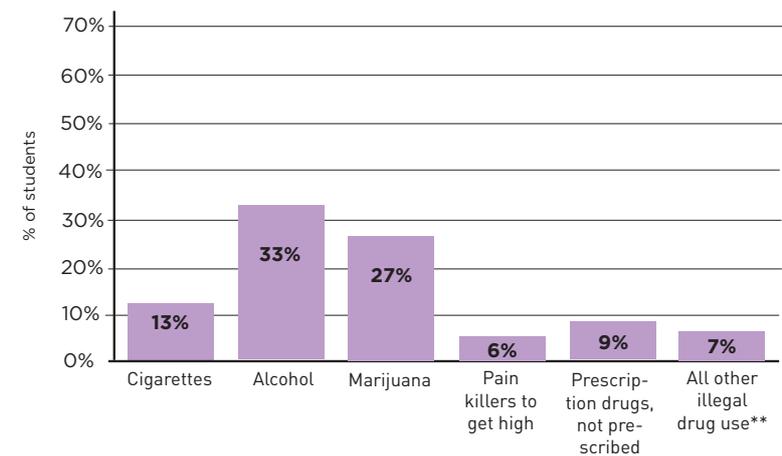
Teens can arm themselves against misperceptions of what is considered “normal” marijuana behavior by looking at good data. They can also share with their friends what the actual norm is regarding teens and marijuana use at their school or in their community, which is most do not use marijuana. The data is clear: according to the 2014 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey, about 3 out of every 4 high school seniors do *not* use marijuana.

Mercer Island High School in King County has a substance abuse prevention club on campus that is using the power of “social norms” to try to correct the misperceptions about alcohol and other drugs and alcohol. The more youth who understand that it is normal among their peers to not use substances or make destructive decisions, the more who will make healthy decisions themselves.

#### ACTIVITY

Write or draw a picture of where you see marijuana and e-cigarette advertising in your community.

**Current (past 30-day) Substance Use, Washington State 12th Grade Students, Washington State Healthy Youth Survey 2014**



**Most youth don't use marijuana, alcohol or other substances.**

\*\*All other illegal drug use includes prescription drugs not prescribed, prescription painkillers to get high, and all other illegal drugs; but does not include alcohol, tobacco or marijuana. Source: <http://www.askhys.net/FactSheets>

**84%**  
of MI 6th-12th graders  
have **NEVER** used  
**marijuana!**

Frequent teen marijuana  
use can lower  
**I.Q.**

Communities MOST of The Washington State Department of Health

Poster showing that most 6th-12th grade students on Mercer Island in King County, Washington have never used marijuana.

<sup>16</sup> <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED527859.pdf>

# MARIJUANA AND E-CIGARETTES: FACTS TEENS CAN USE TO MAKE HEALTHY CHOICES

## Consequences

**Situation:** You drive under the influence...

**Consequences:** Of all the things you could decide to do while under the influence (of marijuana, over-the-counter medicine or alcohol), driving can be the most dangerous—not just to yourself, but to other people as well. You could get in a crash and hurt yourself or others.

Recovering from an injury due to a crash can cost you time out of your life, in a hospital or rehab facility, your ability to get around—to see friends, to school, to work—if you lose your license. You might end up having to pay for a lawyer, AND pay for a bunch of other costs. A crash may also result in someone else being injured or killed because you drove under the influence. Is it worth it?

**Situation:** You get caught with marijuana as a minor...

**Consequences:** Juveniles (anyone age 13–20) will have driving privileges revoked for any offense under this statute. For the first offense, the privileges will be revoked for one year, or until the person reaches 17 years old, whichever is longer. A second or subsequent offense will result in the taking away of driving of privileges for two years or until the individual is 18 years old, whichever is longer.

Possession of retail marijuana is illegal for people under 21 (under limited circumstances medical marijuana is legal for those with medical authorization cards). Teens can be charged and prosecuted.

**Situation:** You want to try marijuana to help curb your anxiety about a class presentation coming up...

**Consequences:** First of all, the FDA has not approved marijuana as a safe and effective medication. Even though many states have passed laws allowing for marijuana to be used for a variety of medical conditions, these are not approved drugs by the FDA (unlike aspirin, ibuprofen or other doctor-prescribed drugs). Some patients report anecdotally that they have experienced benefits for particular medical conditions. If youth use marijuana for medical purposes, they must acquire a medical card to be protected from arrest and prosecution, since marijuana remains illegal for those under 21.

For teens struggling with anxiety, your doctor, school counselor or health care provider may be able to help. There are also free apps for relaxation techniques such as deep breathing and mindfulness meditation.

**Situation:** You get caught with marijuana in a place that is under federal jurisdiction, like a national park visitor's center, or under tribal jurisdiction, like a reservation...

**Consequences:** Possessing and selling marijuana remains a crime under federal law, for both adults and youth. The US Attorney General sets guidance for what types of cases get prioritized for prosecution. Marijuana cases may be prosecuted for violation of federal law at the discretion of the US prosecutors.

When you are on tribal land, you must abide by their laws, including those for drug cultivation, possession and distribution.

**Situation:** Your friend overdoses and needs medical attention, but you are high...

**Consequences:** There will be lots of health consequences for your friend. Call 911 immediately for help. If you think you're witnessing an overdose from any drug and you need to seek medical help to assist someone, the law states that you will receive protection from criminal charges of drug possession.

The overdose victim you're helping is protected, too. Call 911. Washington state has a Good Samaritan law in place; for more information, go to <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=69.50.315>

**Situation:** You know that your parents used to smoke marijuana when they were younger and they thought it wasn't a big deal...

**Consequences:** Back in the day, marijuana may have had a much lower THC level than today's newly legal marijuana. We also know more today about the effect that drugs, such as marijuana and alcohol, have on the developing brain and risk for dependency. Also, we know now that the brain is still developing until age 26 or so. Why risk it?



## Who uses marijuana and e-cigarettes and why?

Most youth in all groups do not use marijuana and e-cigarettes. Unfortunately, some youth report that they are using at higher rates than other groups, putting them at higher risk for health and other consequences. As shown in the charts to the right, white and Asian students in King County had lower rates of marijuana and e-cigarette use compared to youth in all other race/ethnic groups. In King County, higher rates of marijuana use also occurred among LGBTQ youth, youth at academic risk, and youth who have been bullied.

A similar pattern occurs when looking at Washington state as a whole, with higher marijuana-use rates for 10th graders who have been bullied (including for being perceived as gay), who are struggling academically, and who are Latino/Hispanic, African American/Black and Native American/Alaska Native.<sup>17</sup> (For more information, visit [www.askhys.net](http://www.askhys.net).)

If you are someone who falls into a high-risk group, it is entirely valid to feel like the cards are stacked against you. However, many individuals tap into their inner resources and outside support to beat the odds. Why do you think some groups are at higher risk?

While marijuana does not lead to typical signs of dependence like other addictive drugs, a distinctive THC withdrawal syndrome has been identified and many adolescents who have used marijuana report having felt dependent on its use at one time or another<sup>18</sup>. Symptoms of marijuana withdrawal include restlessness, irritability, mild agitation, insomnia, sleep (EEG) disturbance, nausea, sweating, runny nose and cramping. Other typical signs of substance dependence include an increase in tolerance, losing control of usage, or being unable to stop use.

Adolescents may use marijuana to self-medicate for various health conditions, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, anxiety, depression, autism, anorexia and chronic pain. While effective treatments for many of these health conditions do exist, few scientific studies have conclusively found marijuana to be an effective solution. Marijuana may even aggravate, rather than relieve, these health conditions.

### Where to find help

If you are experiencing problems with marijuana, e-cigarettes, alcohol and/or other drugs, you may want to seek help. Reliance on drugs is not a character flaw—having a problem is not something you choose. But you can choose to get help. Many others have struggled with substance use disorders or reliance on drugs—more than 10 percent of American adults report being in recovery from abuse or addiction<sup>19</sup>. You are not alone. Reach out to a professional, such as a counselor, or contact the 24-hour Washington Recovery Help Line at <http://www.warecoveryhelpline.org> or **866.789.1511**, or Teen Link at <http://866teenlink.org/> or 866TEENLINK (**866.833.6546**) from 6-10 p.m.

<sup>17</sup> <http://capaa.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/DOH-Presentation.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK230709/>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.drugfree.org/newsroom/survey-ten-percent-of-american-adults-report-being-in-recovery-from-substance-abuse-or-addiction/>



## You are not invisible.

But sometimes, when you are surrounded by a lot of folks who just don't understand you, it might feel like it. And you may want to do whatever it takes to be seen, accepted or wanted.

The truth is, there are a lot of ways in which gender identity, gender expression, sex and sexual orientation can make a difference in the way people treat you – even though they absolutely should NOT. The truth is, it's not safe for everyone to identify, express or be who they are in every moment and that can be painful in your mind, heart and spirit. There's so much pressure to be who everyone else – family, friends and teachers – wants you to be when there is already so much pressure in other parts of your life.

The truth is, it's not easy to be a young person and even more difficult to be a young person who identifies with LGBTIQQ (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersexual Queer and Questioning) when the rest of the world doesn't really understand or accept these identities.

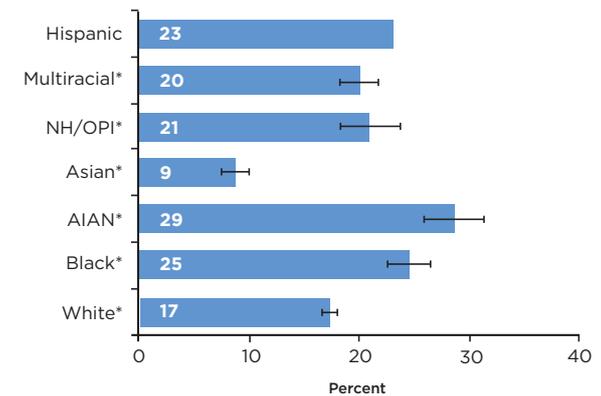
You might have to find ways to deal with feeling alone and invisible. Many times, substances like marijuana might bring you temporary joy or freeze any bad feelings

you might have. Relying on substances like marijuana to make you happy can become a habit you cannot break – you can almost think you need it in your life. The truth is, there are other young people who feel similar pressures and experience feeling invisible. The truth is, marijuana can make us feel good temporarily, when we so often feel bad, that we keep wanting it (and even when we think it is going to make us feel good, it can sometimes make us feel worse).

The truth is, you are not going to change who you are or what you are feeling by using marijuana. There is no need to change yourself because there are other people and places that will accept you as you are. That's the truth.

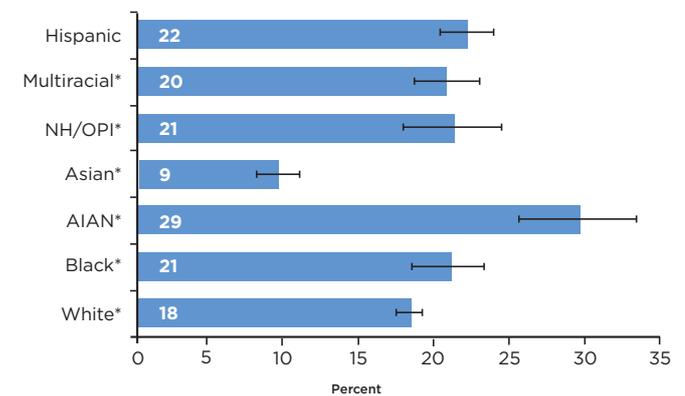
Art Prompts: Write/Draw/Paint/Take Photos/Dance about someone you are that you don't let people see. Why don't you let anyone see that part of you? Imagine your future self, whether it be 5 years or 10 years and all of your aspirations and dreams have come true and you are exactly who you want to be. What will your future self tell your present self? What does it feel like? What do you know in the future, that you need to know right now?

**Marijuana Use by Race/Ethnicity Among 10th Grade Youth in King County, Washington State Healthy Youth Survey, 2014**



\* Non-Hispanic  
Estimates based all participating schools

**E-cigarette Use by Race/Ethnicity Among 10th Grade Youth in King County, Washington State Healthy Youth Survey, 2014**



\* Non-Hispanic  
Estimates based all participating schools

# MARIJUANA AND E-CIGARETTES: FACTS TEENS CAN USE TO MAKE HEALTHY CHOICES

## Think about It

Spreading the word is an important part of drug prevention. Take a look at the many options for spreading the word about drug prevention. Which ones appeal to you the most? Which do you think you'd be particularly effective in carrying out?

## It Could Happen to You

You're at a party with a few friends and, at one point, you don't see anyone you came with. You go into the bathroom, and all of them are there, smoking marijuana that a classmate gave them. They automatically expect you to join them, but you don't want to—and now you don't know how you're going to get home because the guy you rode with is smoking. You sure don't want to get into a car with him if he's high.

## What Would You Do?

What could you say to these friends when they offer you marijuana? What are some ways to say "no?" And, if they are your friends, what could you also say to them to help them realize that marijuana, alcohol, tobacco and other drugs are a bad idea? How could you get home safely? Take a few minutes and make a plan for what to do in this type of situation, so that you are prepared if it ever happens.

## Helping a friend

Use is not the same as abuse or dependency. Dependency is when a person uses alcohol and/or other drugs uncontrollably, despite the fact that the substance use is causing problems. When people have a substance use disorder, their behavior can change dramatically. They may act out of character, which can be confusing and upsetting to friends and family members. If you've noticed any warning signs, investigate as soon as possible.

## Helping basics

### Be honest with yourself and with your friend

Know your limitations. Make sure you have the time and energy to give your friend before you agree to help. If you're not able to help at all, for any reason, say so. You may have a conflict in values, be too close to the situation yourself, or be overwhelmed with your own problems. Help your friend find another resource.

### Don't take it on alone

You may or may not feel qualified to help your friend with all of his or her problems. Learn about resources such as Teen Link (see resources below), counselors, health educators or healthcare providers. Get names and phone numbers that your friend can use to find help from qualified professionals. If your school has a teen health center, offer to go with your friend to check out their resources, which should be absolutely confidential. Find out about services such as Crisis Text Line, [www.crisistextline.org/](http://www.crisistextline.org/), where a person can text START to 741-741.

### Keep in touch

Keep in regular contact and encourage your friend to continue talking with you and to reach out to other friends for a wider support network.

## Remember what's important. Forget marijuana.

This time of your life is important. Looking forward to the day you will graduate from high school? Are you preparing for college? Looking for a good job? Seeking more independence and stability? Pursuing a path in music or the arts? Want to take time to travel and explore?

Whatever your dreams and goals, keep in mind that what you do today may affect you tomorrow.

Using marijuana, alcohol and other drugs can negatively impact your dreams, future and what's important to you. Learn more at <http://listen2yourselfie.org>.

## Will marijuana get in the way of your dreams?

- College
- Career
- Music
- Wealth
- Freedom
- Arts
- Health
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Can marijuana steal anything from your future?

- A driver's license
- A clean record with the law
- Health
- IQ
- Ability to do things you love (sports, school, clubs, activities)
- College
- \_\_\_\_\_

## What's important to you? (make a mental list)

- Extreme sports
- Athletics
- Career path
- Health
- Wealth
- Freedom
- School
- Friends
- Family
- \* Travel
- Being myself
- Being accepted for who I am
- Being a leader in my community
- \_\_\_\_\_



## Visit the following websites for ways you can live above the influence and implement/practice refusal skills:

- Remember what's important and forget marijuana: <http://listen2yourselfie.org>
- Live above the influence: <http://abovetheinfluence.com/living-above/>  
Also refer to the section about influences: <http://abovetheinfluence.com/how-are-you-doing/>
- Refusal/resistance skills: [http://www.thecoolspot.gov/right\\_to\\_resist.aspx](http://www.thecoolspot.gov/right_to_resist.aspx)
- Share what you have to say: <http://abovetheinfluence.com/inspiration-wall/>

## Resources and information for youth, parents, educators and other community members:

- Alcohol & Drug Abuse Institute's Learn About Marijuana website: <http://adai.uw.edu/marijuana/>
- Teen Link: <http://866teenlink.org/>, call to speak with a teen from 6-10 p.m. at 866.TEENLINK (866.833.6546), and the teen chat line from 6-9:30 p.m.
- Washington Recovery Help Line: <http://www.warecoveryhelpline.org/> or 866-789-1511
- 2-1-1 Community Resources: <http://crisisclinic.org/education/2-1-1-community-resources/>
- Gay City LBTQ Resources and Referrals: 206.323.LGBT, <http://gaycity.org/resources>
- Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board: <http://www.liq.wa.gov/>
- Safe Place: <http://www.youthcare.org/our-programs/safe-place>
- National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), Resources for Teens: <http://teens.drugabuse.gov/>
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Behavioral Health Treatment Locator: <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>
- Seattle Children's: <http://www.seattlechildrens.org/clinics-programs/adolescent-substance-abuse/>
- Foundation for a Drug-Free World: <http://www.drugfreeworld.org>



INSPIRING STUDENTS TO LEARN

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# LIVE LIFE ABOVE THE INFLUENCE OF DRUGS

Life...  
Own it...  
Make it the  
best it can be...

The King County Youth Marijuana Prevention and Education Program (lead agencies Public Health—Seattle & King County, King County Department of Community and Human Services, and Seattle Children's) wants to extend a special thank you and acknowledgment to those who assisted with the development of this publication including: Asian Pacific Islander Communities Advocating Together (APICAT), Gay City, City of Mercer Island Youth and Family Services' Mercer Island Communities That Care Project, Science and Management of Addictions (SAMA), State of Washington Department of Health and University of Washington School of Social Work/Social Development Research Group.