

Know Potency, Know Pot



Today's marijuana has little to do with a natural plant.



The Unnatural Truth

- > Levels of THC, the high-inducing ingredient in marijuana, are shifting higher through selective breeding of different strains of the plant.
- > Manufacturers distill THC in an arms race to achieve unnatural, unprecedented potency levels in highly-processed products.
- > Marijuana comes in many forms including bud, edibles, THC concentrates and is sold in some states both as medicine and recreation.

It is a fundamentally different, harder drug with THC potency for bud approaching 20% and concentrates approaching 70% in Colorado, the first state to legalize and commercialize recreational marijuana. This compares to average potencies of less than 4% in the 1980s.

These ultra-potent products (sometimes called concentrated THC) get into the hands of kids. Colorado teens vape and dab potent marijuana forms at rates higher than Colorado adults.

The Harm from Unlimited Potency

Brain Development: The nation's top doctor, the U.S. Surgeon General, says that no amount of marijuana use is safe for the developing brain of an adolescent and for pregnant or breastfeeding women.

Risk of Addiction: Teens 12-17 who use marijuana are twice as likely to advance to substance use disorder than teens who use alcohol or tobacco.

Risk of Physical Harm: Teens with cannabis use disorder and with preexisting mood disorders have an increased risk of self-harm, suicide and death. Colorado teens are more likely to drive after using marijuana than after drinking alcohol.

Mental Health Risks: Use of marijuana products with high THC potency is associated with higher rates of schizophrenia, psychosis and generalized anxiety.



Watch for Physical and Mental Health Symptoms:



Unrelenting Vomiting



Paranoia



Increased Heart Rate



Hallucinations



Difficulty Breathing



Acute or Extended Psychosis



Panic Attacks

The Problem of Unlimited Potency

The rise of high-potency pot has coincided with increases in Colorado hospitalizations and poison center calls.

More potent pot has been tied to psychotic episodes; a British study has linked higher potency pot (12%-18%) to 24% increase in new cases of psychosis.

The Solution

Limit THC potencies until there is scientific evidence to prove highly potent pot does not pose unacceptable risks to the public. After the Dutch observed negative impacts from rising THC potencies, a team of health experts concluded that THC potencies above 15% should be considered a hard drug.

Limit sales amount and cap THC potency to 10% for medical marijuana patients under 21 years old.

Fund research to better understand the risks associated with high concentrations of THC.

Fund efforts to reduce underage and perinatal marijuana use.

Educate the public – especially parents and trusted adults – on the well-studied and documented negative impacts to the developing brain. Clearly communicated parental expectations are a known protective factor from youth substance use.

Limit marijuana commercialization, advertising and marketing, which normalizes and promotes use among youth.

Enforce laws restricting false health and benefit claims.

Important Resources

National Institute on Drug Abuse for teens: <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/marijuana>

National Institute on Drug Abuse: <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana>

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eQSkZvgRFuY_KnKYXVYnbgnd2SU7WQhj/view?usp=drivesdk

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BGCz9OWD0quAmm9A5keDc05fIE1wDIX1/view?usp=drivesdk>

National Poison Control (800) 222-1222 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800) 273-8255

One Chance to Grow Up is a project of The Colorado Nonprofit Development Center (CNDC).



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