



## Product Facts

Today's commercialized marijuana is fundamentally different and has little to do with a natural plant.

- Cultivators selectively breed for higher levels of THC, the high-inducing ingredient in marijuana. A recent [analysis](#) of the Colorado Marijuana Market since sales began in 2014, found that the average potency for marijuana flower had increased by a third to 18.8% THC in 2019. This is [four times higher](#) than average THC potency of the early 1990s.
- Manufacturers also extract THC, in an arms race to achieve unnatural potency levels. Average THC potency for concentrates had increased by almost half to 69% in 2019. Some products exceed [90%](#) THC. THC concentrates also make up an ever-increasing portion of sales.
- The recreational THC industry also has developed methods of use so discreet that parents and educators are left in the dark. THC producers hide their product in vape pens resembling computer drives or [asthma inhalers](#), [dissolvable powders](#) and [mouth sprays](#).
- Sweet and fruity flavors that are federally banned in tobacco products are still allowed in [flavored THC vape products](#), such as strawberry lemonade.

## Youth Facts

Almost ten years since voting to regulate marijuana, Colorado faces numerous concerning measures of use by high schoolers, including:

- rising [frequency](#) of daily or near daily use.
- a [persisting shift](#) away from smoking to using exponentially more potent THC products.
- increases across the state in use of edibles, dabbing and vaping ultra-potent THC concentrates ([2021](#)).
- use rates that are [higher than adult use rates](#) for dabbing and vaping, despite it being illegal for anyone under 21 years to use non-medical marijuana.
- [THC](#) is the number one substance found in Colorado teens who die by suicide.

Colorado young adults 18-25 years old are the highest marijuana consuming population (1 in 3 report regular use), and report [daily use nearly double the nationwide average](#).

## Safety Facts

Emergency departments are seeing more patients in crisis from these extreme THC products.

- [Rates of hospitalizations increased](#) with possible marijuana exposures, diagnoses

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- or billing codes in Colorado after each era of policy change: legalized medical marijuana, commercialized medical marijuana, commercialized adult-use marijuana.
- Colorado experienced a [three-fold increase in emergency room visits](#) in the first five years of adult-use marijuana sales. Seventeen percent of visits were for repeated vomiting (hyperemesis) and twelve percent for acute psychosis<sup>1</sup>. [One third of patients were admitted](#) to the hospital.
- The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment [analysis](#) of the health effects of THC concentration in Colorado’s legal market warned that “it is clear that use of products with high concentrations of THC are associated with higher rates of psychiatric disorders, such as schizophrenia, psychosis, and generalized anxiety.”

Roads are less safe.

- Colorado has experienced [increasing](#) marijuana-impaired traffic fatalities.
- Traffic deaths involving drivers who tested positive for marijuana have already more than [doubled](#) from 2013–2017, during the first five years of commercialized sales.
- In a [2020 Colorado Department of Transportation report](#), [69%](#) of marijuana users admitted to driving while high.
- Colorado high school students are [more likely](#) to drive after using marijuana than alcohol.

Doug Robinson  
Chairman of the Board, One Chance To Grow Up  
Doug.robinson.co@gmail.com

Diane Carlson  
Policy Director, One Chance To Grow Up  
diane@onechancetogrowup.org

Henny Lasley  
Executive Director, One Chance To Grow Up  
henny@onechancetogrowup.org

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<sup>1</sup> Cannabis-induced psychosis (CIP) has the highest conversion rate to schizophrenia of any substance-induced psychosis (ie opioids, amphetamines). A large register-based [cohort study](#) from Denmark found over 40% of patients who experienced CIP were diagnosed with schizophrenia within the 20 year study period, half converted within 3 years. Patients aged 16-25 had the highest risk for conversion to schizophrenia.