

Marijuana in Colorado

Eleven Years In: Ten Facts Impacting Kids

1

Increase in average potency: Over the past few years, THC, the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana, has increased to 19.6% in bud and to 68.6% in concentrates. Some retail marijuana stores advertise up to 95% THC in concentrate products. Only 7% of products sold in Colorado have a potency lower than 15% THC, the threshold considered high by the Colorado Department of Health and Environment (CDPHE).

2

“We are seeing increases in addiction, psychosis, depression, hospitalizations, and suicide,” according to the CDPHE’s July 2020 Report THC Concentration in Colorado– Marijuana Health Effects and Public Health Concerns.

3

THC is the #1 substance found in teens 15–19 that died by suicide in Colorado in 2021. Almost twice as many deaths as those with alcohol present were reported by coroners.

- Black youth: 66.7% (Males: 62.5%)
- Hispanic youth: 49% (Males: 56.3%)
- White youth: 33.3% (Males: 41.7%)

4

Marijuana is not just a plant. There are higher profits in processed products, so market share has shifted to concentrates, vaping and edibles.

5

Products continue to hide marijuana. Vaporizers, cupcakes, candies, sodas, eyedrops, breath mints, look-alike asthma relief inhalers, and even powders that can be sprinkled on foods and in drinks are sold in the recreational market. Why is discretion and hidden THC a marketing tactic if not targeting children?

6

Nationally, there has been a 1375% increase in pediatric edible cannabis accidental ingestions over the past 5 years, with the potential for significant toxicity and hospitalization.

7

The medical marijuana pipeline to our high schools which allowed underage use of high potency marijuana has shrunk by 72% since 2021.

8

Our roads are LESS SAFE. In a 2020 Colorado Department of Transportation report, 69% of marijuana users admitted to driving while high and 27% reported driving high almost daily. 29.2% of drivers involved in fatal crashes in CO tested positive for THC in 2022.

9

Even after a decade of commercialized marijuana, regulators can’t keep up. Colorado’s system of unlimited potency, unrestricted products and ex-post facto regulations is like “chasing cheetahs with butterfly nets” according to a state health official.

10

The 2018 Federal Farm Bill unleashed hemp-derived psychoactive THC products in corner stores, gas stations, grocery stores and head shops across the nation. These products belong in regulated stores where age restricted sales and additional safeguards exist. While it is difficult to stop online sales from outside the state, beginning in 2024 Colorado will significantly limit how much THC can be sold outside of marijuana stores.

First State Update

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Actions You Can Take

Learn more about today's marijuana:

- onechancetogrowup.org
- [THCphotos.org](https://thcphotos.org)
- <https://cannabis.colorado.gov/health-effects/effects-on-youth>
- www.colorado.gov/marijuanahealthinfo
- <https://marijuanahealthreport.colorado.gov/literature-review/public-health-statements>
- <https://forwardtogetherco.com/>
- <https://www.samhsa.gov/know-risks-marijuana>
- www.codot.gov/safety/alcohol-and-impaired-driving/druggeddriving
- www.betheinfluence.us

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Next Steps:

- Sign up at onechancetogrowup.org to receive timely information/action alerts
- Get involved
- Become a community voice
- Urge your elected officials to do better—they LISTEN
- Be honest & talk about the harms of today's marijuana

One Chance to Grow Up protects kids from THC through transparency, education, empowerment, and policy. We don't take sides on the politics of legalization but instead serve as a reliable resource for parents, media, policymakers, and all who care about kids. Started by concerned parents, we're a 501(c)(3) nonprofit supported by charitable contributions.

