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## Marijuana

Marijuana (also known as 'pot', 'weed' or a number of other names), is a preparation of the cannabis plant designed to be used as a mind-altering drug.

Marijuana has been getting a lot of positive press lately. The nation-wide push to legalize it for medical uses has many people thinking that it is a risk-free drug. This is just not true.

Science has told us that using marijuana poses risks for the following reasons:

- The active ingredients of marijuana are not as safe as claimed by its proponents.
- The effects it has on the human body and mind are real. This is especially true for young people, whose minds and bodies are still developing.



*A "joint" or marijuana cigarette.*



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## Marijuana: Helpful or Harmful?



**39%** of North Country high school students think that people who smoke marijuana regularly are at **little or no risk** of harming themselves.

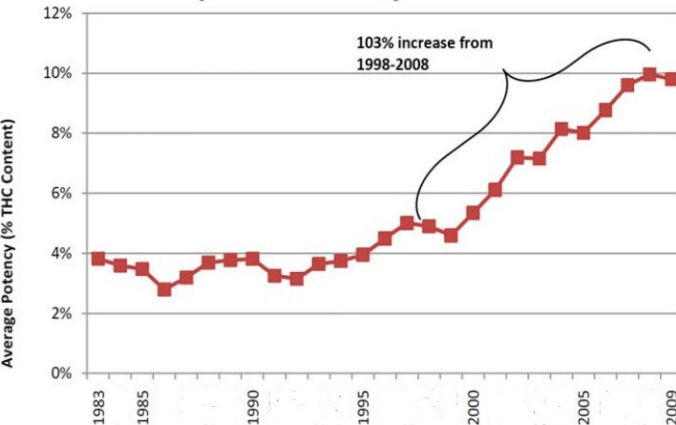
## ARE THEY RIGHT?

## What is in marijuana?

Marijuana contains **Tetrahydrocannabinol** or “THC,” a chemical compound that produces the hallucinogenic reaction in users. It can also result in the following:

- **Increased anxiety** (including panic attacks) and psychotic symptoms.<sup>1</sup>
- **Impaired judgment**, leading to risky behaviors like unprotected sexual intercourse or driving while intoxicated.<sup>2</sup>
- **Impaired reaction time and attention**, both of which are key skills for driving and staying safe.<sup>3</sup>

Potency of Seized Marijuana in the U.S.



Since 1983 the THC content in seized marijuana has more than **DOUBLED**. This change in chemical makeup of marijuana is a result of selective breeding of the plant.

1. Hall & Degenhardt, 2009  
2. Jacobus, Bava, Cohen-Zion, Mahmood, & Tapert, 2009  
3. MacDonald, 2003

## How it affects your child

Use of marijuana can be harmful for people of any age., but it presents special risks for people whose brains are still developing.

- Marijuana smoke contains many of the same **cancer-causing chemicals** as cigarette smoke.<sup>4</sup>
- Other studies have shown a link between marijuana use and developing long-term problems with **anxiety, depression, and schizophrenia**.<sup>5</sup>
- North Country high school students who use marijuana are more likely to report **lower grades**. Did you know that:

**51%** of North Country students reporting grades of D or F use marijuana, compared to only **12%** of those reporting As.<sup>6</sup>

*At age 25, people who used marijuana during their teen years report doing **worse** in school, earning **less** money, and being **unemployed** at a higher rate than their non-using peers.<sup>7</sup>*

4. Tetrault, Crothers, Moore, Mehra, Concasto, & Fiellin, 2007  
5. National Institute on Drug Abuse. Marijuana: An Update on the National Institute on Drug  
6. New Hampshire Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2011  
7. Fergusson & Boden, 2008  
8. Clark, Shamblen, Ringwalt, & Hanley, 2012

## What you can do

### Talk

You may think your opinion doesn't matter to your child. Think again. Here are some numbers to consider:

**55%** *The rate of marijuana use among North Country high school students who say their parents don't think it's wrong to use marijuana.*

**18%** *The rate of marijuana use among North Country high school students who know their parents disapprove.*<sup>6</sup>

**So talk to your kids about marijuana and let them know you don't approve!**

### Pay Attention

Studies have shown that paying attention to where your kids are and who they're hanging out with can reduce their chances of using marijuana.<sup>8</sup>

**So go ahead and get involved!**

For more information on getting involved or talking with your kids, visit [www.drugfreeh.org](http://www.drugfreeh.org)

