

What Parents Need to Know about Today's Cannabis (Marijuana)



CANNABIS (Marijuana) IS DANGEROUS FOR YOUTH. 10 FACTS PARENTS SHOULD KNOW:



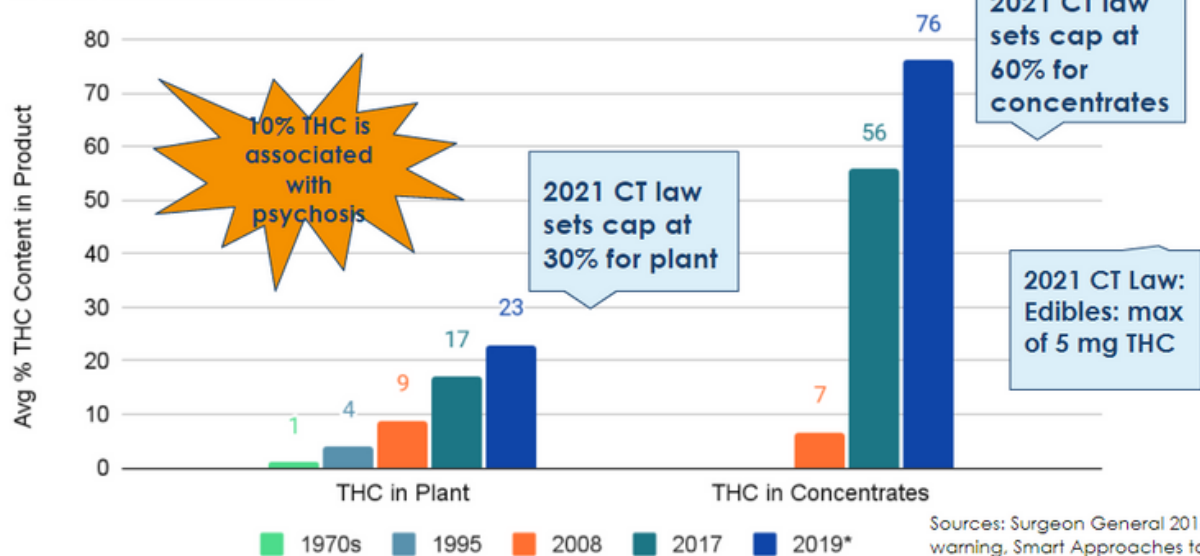
1. Possession of cannabis is now legal in CT for people **over age 21 only**--same as alcohol and vaping. Adults can be charged under CT's Social Host Law if youth use marijuana or cannabis under their roof. (\$2000 penalty per youth!)
2. Cannabis cannot be used in public spaces like restaurants, beaches or parks. Cannabis can only be purchased in **licensed retail stores**, which will begin to open in 2023.
3. **Driving** under the influence of cannabis, alcohol or any drug is dangerous & illegal. Cannabis affects judgment, reaction time, vision and other important driving skills.
4. Today's cannabis **plant** has been genetically engineered to have *much* more THC and much less CBD than in the past. THC is the drug component of the plant, which directly affects the brain. Today THC can be used in **concentrated forms** (vapes / dabs, wax, oil, shatter), which remove all plant matter and can be up to 96% THC--the pure psychoactive drug. **The higher the level of THC, the greater the risk** to brain development in young people and the greater the negative impact on mental health.
5. Cannabis affects the part of the brain that is still maturing up to age 25. As a result, teens who use it several times a week can permanently **lose up to 8 IQ points**.
6. THC is **addictive**. 1 in 6 teen users will become addicted, compared with 1 in 10 adult users, because of how it affects the teen brain during its development.
7. THC levels above 10% increase (rather than relieve!) anxiety and can cause **Cannabis-Induced Psychosis** and in some cases schizophrenia, particularly among teen users. CT hospitals had a 195% increase in psychosis from 2016 to 2019 associated with cannabis.
8. It is very easy to **overdose on edibles**, because they can take 1.5- 2 hours to take effect. Kids and pets are at particular risk because edibles can look like candy. Edible gummies were recently found illegally for sale in a nearby town, with *each* gummy being the equivalent of 3 servings of THC. Teach little kids never to eat anything, even if it looks like candy, without asking your permission.
9. **Lock up** any cannabis products you may have to prevent access by kids and teens.
10. **Talk to your kids** about the risks to their brain and tell them not to use any substances until they are of legal age. They listen! In our 2021 Norwalk Youth Survey, kids whose parents sent a strong message about marijuana were 8x less likely to use it. (Overall, most kids DON'T use drugs. In 2021, 6% of Norwalk high school students reported using weed.) Download the free "[Talk. They Hear You](#)" app for conversation starters, information and resources.

Today's Marijuana has been Engineered for Maximum THC Content

(THC = the psychoactive drug from the plant)

Increase in Strength of Cannabis Over Time

% THC Content in Product



RESPONSIBLE ADULT USE OF CANNABIS

Things to know for adults who choose to use cannabis:

- "Start low, go slow." Start with low-potency THC products. The higher the THC percentage (such as in concentrates), the more addictive it is and the worse impact on mental health. Vaping THC, for example by using a dab pen, means using the drug in an extremely strong form, in addition to introducing a foreign substance directly into the lungs.
- Read the label to know how much to consume. One serving of THC is 5 mg.
- Edibles can take up to 1.5-2 hours to take effect. Be careful not to overconsume in the meantime.
- Avoid purchasing street drugs, which can be contaminated or laced with other substances.
- Avoid any use if you are pregnant. Cannabis crosses the placental barrier and affects fetal development.
- Be sure to keep products away from children and pets. Like alcohol or prescription drugs, cannabis should be safely stored out of reach, preferably locked up.
- Be clear with your children that cannabis, like alcohol and other drugs, is unsafe for anyone under age due to the impact on brain development.
- Visit beintheknowCT.org to learn more about cannabis in CT. Visit drugfreeCT.org for information about talking with your kids about substances.

Brought to you by The Norwalk Partnership, our community coalition dedicated to preventing substance misuse and promoting mental wellness in Norwalk youth and young adults. Please visit TheNorwalkPartnership.org