

Is Getting High Worth the Risk?

Increased Learning Deficits

- A recent study in 2012, found that those who used cannabis heavily in their teens and continued through adulthood showed a permanent drop in IQ of 8 points.¹
- Marijuana continues to negatively affect attention span, memory, learning, and intelligence after the intoxicating effects of the drug have subsided.²
- Youth who are persistent cannabis users had significantly more memory and attention problems; easily getting distracted, misplacing things, forgetting to keep appointments, or returning calls.³
- Youth with an average grade of D or below were more than four times as likely to have used marijuana in the past year than youth with an average grade of A.⁴
- Because marijuana use affects brain development, it is consistently associated with poorer academic grades and a reduced likelihood of graduating from school.⁵

Impact on Youth Health and Mental Health

- Marijuana use can worsen depression and lead to more serious mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, anxiety, and even suicide. Marijuana use during adolescence is directly linked to the onset of major mental illness, including psychosis, schizophrenia, depression, and anxiety.⁶
- A person's risk of a heart attack is increased four-fold during the first hour after smoking marijuana.⁷
- Youth marijuana use rates in Adams County Colorado increased from 19% in 2010 to 29% in 2012.⁸

Impact on Dropout Rates

- Compared with their nonsmoking peers, students who smoke marijuana are more likely to have lower grades and to drop out of high school.⁹

1 Meier, M.H., Caspi, A., et al. *Persistent Cannabis Users Show Neuropsychological Decline from Childhood to Midlife*. October 2012. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22927402>

2 Hall, W., and Degenhard L. *Adverse Health Effects on Non-Medical Cannabis Use*. October 2009. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19837255>

3 National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) September 2012. www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana

4 Office of Applied Studies. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA). *National Survey on Drug Abuse Report*. July 2002. www.samhsa.gov

5 Macleod, J., Oakes, R., Copello, A. et al. *Psychological and Social Sequelae of Cannabis and Other Drug Use by Young People...* May 2004.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15145631#>

6 National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) *Marijuana: Facts Parents Need to Know*. March 2011.

http://theparenttoolkit.org/images/uploads/toolkit/resource_files/parents_marijuana_brochure.pdf

7 Ibid

8 Rocky Mountain HIDTA. *The Legalization of Marijuana in Colorado: The Impact*. August 2013.

http://www.catalystcoalition.com/uploads/FINAL_Legalization_of_MJ_in_Colorado_The_Impact.pdf

9 Ibid