Legal Doesn't Mean Safe

The recreational use and sale of marijuana will begin in Illinois on January 1st, 2020. This change in law can create some confusion to youth on the safety and normalization of the drug. Make sure to have frequent conversations with your teens about the risks of marijuana use!

Recreational use of marijuana under the age of 21 is illegal.
Recreational marijuana legalization only applies to individuals aged 21 and above. Being prosecuted for marijuana use under the age of 21 could result in legal action, school disciplinary action and could affect college and job applications.

Marijuana can harm the teen brain.
The teen brain is still developing, and marijuana can cause abnormal brain development in areas of the brain involved in processing emotions, learning, and forming memories.

Regular marijuana use in teens can lead to a mental health disorder.
Teens who use marijuana regularly are higher at risk for developing a serious mental health disorder such as addiction, depression, or psychosis.

Being under the influence of marijuana impairs driving abilities.
Driving under the influence of marijuana or riding in a car with a driver who is under the influence of marijuana is extremely dangerous and can result in serious and even fatal car accidents.

High potency marijuana has been linked to addiction.
Today's marijuana has a higher percentage of THC, the chemical in marijuana that produces the "high". High rates of THC have been linked to causing dependency among users.

Inhaling marijuana smoke can cause lung damage.
Smoke from marijuana irritates the lungs, and can cause a chronic cough that is similarly found in people that smoke cigarettes.

For more information on how to talk to your kids about the risks of youth marijuana use, visit www.dupagePLT.org

Marijuana Use and Teens What Parents Need to Know

The teen years are a time of rapid growth, exploration, and onset of risk taking. Taking risks with new behaviors provides kids and teens the opportunity to test their skills and abilities and discover who they are. But, some risk behaviors—such as using marijuana—can have harmful and long-lasting effects on a teen’s health and well-being.

Marijuana and the teen brain

Unlike adults, the teen brain is actively developing and often will not be fully developed until the mid 20s. Marijuana use during this period may harm the developing teen brain.

- Problems with memory and learning.
- Difficulty thinking and problem solving.
- Impaired coordination.
- Difficulty maintaining attention.

Negative effects on school and social life

Marijuana use in adolescence or early adulthood can have a serious impact on a teen’s life.

Decline in school performance.
Students who use marijuana may get lower grades and may be more likely to drop out of high school than their peers who do not use.

Increased risk of mental health issues.
Marijuana use has been linked to a range of mental health problems in teens such as depression or anxiety. Psychosis has also been seen in teens at higher risk like those with a family history.

Impaired driving.
Driving while impaired by any substance, including marijuana, is dangerous. Marijuana negatively affects a number of skills required for safe driving, such as reaction time, coordination, and concentration.

Potential for addiction.
Research shows that about 1 in 6 teens who repeatedly use marijuana can become addicted, which means that they may make unsuccessful efforts to quit using marijuana or may give up important activities with friends and family in favor of using marijuana. - CDC

References

Vaping Fact Sheet
What is Vaping?
Vaping is the act of inhaling and exhaling the aerosol, often referred to as vapor, produced by an e-cigarette or similar device. While regular cigarette use has decreased, vaping has increased among teens and is now considered an epidemic. Vaping products come in many flavors, which can attract youth, and can also contain nicotine or THC, the psychoactive property found in marijuana that produces the high. - Partnership for Drug-Free Kids

Common Names
E-cigs, E-hookahs, Mods, Vape Pens, Vapes, Tank Systems

What are the Risks?
Vaping chemicals used in the liquids can be more concentrated and dangerous.

Youth who vape are 4X more likely to begin smoking traditional cigarettes.

Body Risks
- Higher blood pressure
- Increased heart rate
- Ear, eye and throat irritation

Inhibit Healthy Brain Development
- Nicotine use in early adolescents causes changes in the brain that make life-long addiction much more likely
- Can impact parts of the brain responsible for decision making and impulse control

Tips to Recognize Vaping
Odor: Unlike traditional cigarettes, e-cigarettes do not have a pungent smell. E-liquids come in a wide variety of flavors such as mint, fruit punch, and vanilla.

Unfamiliar devices: E-cigarettes were first invented to be disposable and look like traditional cigarettes. They have now evolved and often resemble pens, cell phone cases and the most commonly found shape USB drives, such as the JUUL. The easiest way to spot these devices is to look for holes (mouthpiece).

Batteries and Chargers: These devices have a battery component and need to be charged. Pay attention to unfamiliar chargers or batteries laying around.

Increased thirstiness: Propylene Glycol (PG), the main substance in e-cigarettes is a hygroscopic substance, meaning it binds or holds water. The PG in e-liquid will extract water from your mouth, nose & eyes which can lead to dehydration.

Metallic wires and cotton wicks: If you find organic cotton, empty plastic vials or thin metallic coils lying in your child’s room, this could also be a red flag.