

MARIJUANA MYTHS VS FACTS

FACT SHEET #1

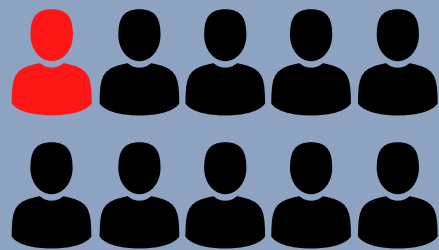
As efforts to legalize marijuana continue to make headlines and access to 'medical' marijuana increases in the homes of Adams County youth and adults, it is important to look at the facts about marijuana misuse and the myths that continue to be spread.



Myth #1: Marijuana cannot harm you.

FACT: All drugs and substances consumed can cause long term and short term risks. Because marijuana is referred to as a natural substance (just like tobacco or alcohol) it gains the reputation of being safe.

Unfortunately it can contribute to anxiety, depression, accidental injury, and psychological dependence. So, YES, it can in fact harm you! ^(*2)



Myth #2: Marijuana is not addictive.

FACT: Marijuana is a psychoactive substance which can in fact be addictive. The drug can be habit forming which in turn can also cause a psychological dependence. 1 in 10 adults who use the drug become addicted. ^(*2,3)

Myth #3: Marijuana is safe during pregnancy.

FACT: The American Academy of Pediatrics states that no amount of marijuana (whether ingested, vaped or smoked) is safe for pregnant or breastfeeding women. Using this drug could actually be harmful to the baby causing issues with growth, risk of being stillborn, premature birth and even long term issues with brain development. Chemicals from marijuana can also pass through the breast milk to the infant child. ^(*3)

Myth #4: Marijuana is good for my brain.

FACT: According to SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration), "Marijuana can cause permanent IQ loss of as much as 8 points when people start using it at a young age. These IQ points do not come back, even after quitting marijuana." Using marijuana can negatively affect the brain, including the parts of the brain responsible for memory, learning, attention and reaction time. Think school work or driving a vehicle. ^(*1, 3)



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According to SAMHSA, "Marijuana is the most commonly used illegal substance in the U.S. Marijuana use among adults, both sexes, and pregnant women is going up. At the same time, the perception of how harmful marijuana use can be is declining. Increasingly, young people today do not consider marijuana use a risky behavior."^(*3)



Myth #5: Marijuana is safe while driving.

FACT: If you drive after smoking, vaping or ingesting marijuana, not only is your reaction time slower, your coordination can be significantly decreased. Studies have found that the chances of being in an auto accident doubles after using marijuana. And, YES, you can be arrested for driving under the influence of marijuana even if you have a state issued medical marijuana card.^(*3, 4)

Myth #6: Marijuana is legal.

FACT: In some states marijuana has been legalized to be used medicinally and/or recreationally. In Pennsylvania the medical marijuana program provides access to medical marijuana for patients with specific medical conditions, however, it is NOT legal at the federal level. "Recreational Marijuana" is NOT legal in Pennsylvania.



Myth #7: Marijuana is cool.

FACT: According to the 2019 Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS), 73% of Adams County youth believe that people are at moderate or great risk of harming themselves (physically or in other ways) if they use marijuana regularly (more than twice a week). 71% of Adams County middle and high school students feel their friends would think it was wrong for them to use marijuana. 90% of Adams County youth believe that their parents would think it was wrong for them to use marijuana.^(*5)

*Sources

1. Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM). "Marijuana Quick Facts." learnaboutsam.org
2. Prevention Plus Wellness, LLC. 2016. "9 Myths about Marijuana Use Harm." preventionpluswellness.com.
3. Know the risks of marijuana. (n.d.). Retrieved March 16, 2021, from <https://www.samhsa.gov/marijuana>
4. Sonoma County Department of Health Services "Myths and Facts about Marijuana Use."
5. Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. 2019. "2019 Pennsylvania Youth Survey"

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