

2/1/2019

## **Knowledge can fight the impact of marijuana on teens**

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The DuPage County Health Department recently released a report that sounds the alarm regarding the impact of marijuana on young people. The report indicates that young people who have used marijuana within the past month were much more likely to:

- use cigarettes and alcohol
- binge drink
- use other illicit drugs
- drink heavily

compared to those who did not use marijuana within the past month, according to a national survey.

Marijuana today is two to three times more potent than it was in the past, according to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

Teens' decision making, concentration, and memory can be affected for days after using marijuana. Marijuana has significant short-term and long-term effects on:

- problem solving
- long-term and short-term memory
- the ability to stop a habitual behavior when needed.

The DuPage Prevention Leadership Team cites the following negative effects of marijuana use on young people's school and social life:

- Decline in school performance
- Increased risk of mental health issues, including depression and anxiety
- Impaired driving
- Potential for addiction

Marijuana is addictive. Teen-agers have a more than 17 percent chance of becoming addicted to marijuana if they start using it when they are adolescents, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

## **Vaping Epidemic**

As associated problem is the growing number of teens who are vaping. Results of a 2018 National Youth Tobacco Survey indicate 1.5 million more teens used e-cigarettes in 2018 than in 2017. Many parents think vaping is not a big deal, but teens can access

marijuana through vaping. Hash oil with tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) can be consumed through vaping devices, including e-cigarettes. There is no residue and no odor, so, unlike years ago when there was a distinctive odor of marijuana being smoked, with vaping it is difficult for parents to know what's in the liquid that young people are vaping.

When the liquid gets heated in vapes, approximately 40 chemicals get released, according to Matthew Quinn from Rosecrance. These chemicals include:

- Acetone
- Benzene (pest and gas)
- Formaldehyde
- Cadmium (car batteries)
- Lead
- Acetaldehyde (paint stripper)
- Propylene Glycol (deicing)
- Tin
- Nickel

The first four of these chemicals also are in cigarettes, and ironically, many young people say they don't smoke cigarettes because of the dangers of chemicals in cigarettes, and yet they admit to trying vaping.

### **What Parents and Guardians Can Do**

Parents and guardians can help reduce the chances of their teens being in potentially harmful situations by getting educated about vaping and the effects of marijuana.

- A good source of information is the DuPage Prevention Leadership Team's website, <http://www.dupageplt.org/>
- National Institute on Drug Abuse provides a wealth of resources for parents, guardians and teens at <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts>
- Be engaged through conversation and observation.
  - Learn what marijuana paraphernalia looks like and look for it.
    - E-cigarettes often look like USB drives, pens and cell phone cases
- Attend Glenbard Parent Series events, which feature nationally recognized authors and local experts on issues facing teens and their parents.

Marijuana use is a growing problem, and it's a community problem. Working together, we can help our young people make good choices and stay safe.