

RETAIL MARIJUANA IN COLORADO

HEALTH EFFECTS

June 13, 2015

The Retail Marijuana Public Health Advisory Committee systematically reviewed the literature on the health effects of marijuana. This is a summary of the high-level findings from *Monitoring Health Concerns Related to Marijuana in Colorado: 2014*. **For a complete report on their findings, visit bit.ly/CDPHE_RMPHAC.**



IMMEDIATE EFFECTS

Being high or even buzzed can make some activities more dangerous. For occasional users, a single serving (10 mg THC) of marijuana is enough to hurt your ability to drive or do other activities safely.

People often feel the effects from smoking or vaping marijuana within minutes, while it may take hours to feel effects from edibles. The effects and the time before effects are felt can be different for everyone.

Wait at least 6 hours after smoking or at least 8 hours after eating/drinking marijuana before driving, biking, skiing or doing other activities.

Marijuana may make your heart beat faster, up to twice as quickly, after use.

The chemical in marijuana that makes you feel “high,” tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), can cause temporary psychotic symptoms. These symptoms, like not knowing what is real and paranoia, are more common with large doses of THC.



BRAIN AND MENTAL HEALTH EFFECTS

Heavy use of marijuana can have a negative effect on your memory.

This damage can last a week or more after the last time you used.

Regular use of marijuana is associated with depression. Other mental health problems like anxiety may also be associated with marijuana use.



RESPIRATORY EFFECTS

Both firsthand and secondhand smoke contains the same cancer-causing chemicals as tobacco smoke.

People who heavily smoke marijuana (daily or near daily use) can have some of the same health problems as tobacco smokers.

These include coughing, wheezing and chronic symptoms like bronchitis.



INTERACTIONS WITH OTHER SUBSTANCES

Using alcohol and marijuana at the same time is more dangerous than using either alone and increases the risk of a car crash.

Use caution when taking medication and marijuana at the same time. There may be drug interactions that are not yet identified.

Talk to your healthcare provider about marijuana use if you are taking prescription medications.



USE DURING PREGNANCY AND BREASTFEEDING

There is no known safe amount of marijuana use during pregnancy or if breastfeeding.

Using marijuana while pregnant may harm the baby. THC in marijuana passes to the baby, which may make it harder for the child to pay attention and learn, especially as they grow.

For more information on health effects for pregnant or breastfeeding women and their babies, visit bit.ly/MJ_Mothers.



MARIJUANA EDIBLES

Since the body slowly digests edibles like regular food, marijuana-infused products can take up to 4 hours to take full effect.

As of February 2015, all edible retail marijuana products must have clear single servings of 10 mg THC, with no more than 100 mg per product.

Use caution when consuming any marijuana. Start with up to one serving, then wait until you feel the effect before deciding to use more.

Marijuana products can be confused for regular food or candy. Be sure to keep all marijuana products in child-resistant packaging, clearly labeled and locked up.



CHILDREN AND ACCIDENTAL MARIJUANA USE

More children accidentally get into marijuana in states with legal marijuana. Marijuana can make children very sick, sometimes needing hospitalization.

Child-resistant packaging can help stop accidental poisoning.

Marijuana products purchased from retail or medical marijuana stores are required by law to have child-resistant packaging. Keep marijuana in this packaging and store it in a locked area children cannot see or reach.



USE AMONG ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS

Brain development is not complete until age 25. For the best chance to reach their full potential, youth should not use marijuana.

Youth who use marijuana regularly are more likely to have a hard time learning, problems remembering and lower math and reading scores.

For more information and tips for youth prevention, visit bit.ly/MJ_Youth.

Talk to your doctor if you have concerns about marijuana and your health.

RESOURCES

For more information on marijuana in Colorado, including laws, health effects and resources for youth prevention, visit Colorado.gov/Marijuana.

If you are worried that you used too much marijuana, call the poison control hotline as soon as possible. Calling is free and you will be helped quickly: 1-800-222-1222. If symptoms seem bad, call 911 or go to an emergency room right away.



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