



## Health Harms of Cannabis Use

In 2017, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) reviewed the available scientific evidence on the health effects of cannabis and cannabis products, and while noting substantial evidence of therapeutic effectiveness of medicinal cannabis for a limited number of indications, noted evidence of association of cannabis use with harm in a wide range of areas.<sup>1</sup> The landmark NASEM study found “substantial evidence”<sup>2</sup> to support the following conclusions:



Cannabis use is associated with increased risk of **motor vehicle crashes**

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Maternal cannabis smoking during pregnancy is associated with **low birth weight in offspring**

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Initiation of use at an earlier age or more frequent use is a risk factor for the development of **problem cannabis use**

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Long-term cannabis smoking is associated with **worse respiratory symptoms** and more frequent **chronic bronchitis** episodes

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Cannabis use increases the risk of development of **schizophrenia and other psychoses**, with the highest risk among the most frequent users

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The NASEM study found that less conclusive, but still worrisome, emerging evidence exists for a wide range of other harms, including:



Impaired **academic achievement and educational** outcomes

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Use among youth carries special **risks to the developing brain** such as decreased cognitive function

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Increased **suicide completion**, acute **heart attack** and increased **unemployment**, among others

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Since 2017 new evidence has emerged reinforcing the strong association with psychoses, especially with high potency products, long term neurodevelopmental harm in children exposed during pregnancy, and strengthening evidence of suicide risk and of heart attacks and stroke.

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<sup>1</sup> The Health Effects of Cannabis and Cannabinoids: The Current State of Evidence and Recommendations for Research | The National Academies Press. <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/24625/the-health-effects-of-cannabis-and-cannabinoids-the-current-state>. Accessed July 12, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> The Academies defined Substantial Evidence as follows: There is strong evidence to support or refute a statistical association between cannabis or cannabinoid use and the health endpoint of interest.