

10 TIPS FOR SAFER CANNABIS USE IF YOU CHOOSE TO USE

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Dial 9-8-8 Poison Helpline: (800) 222-1222

Every form of cannabis use can pose risks to your health. The only way to reliably avoid any risk for harm is by not using cannabis. Cannabis products come in many forms and can be used in different ways; some are more hazardous than others. If you decide to use cannabis, follow these recommendations to lower risks to your health.

01 Weed can wait.

The younger you start using cannabis, the higher your risk of developing dependence, mental health issues, and other problems. The brain is still developing until about age 26. Young people, especially teens, should delay cannabis use as long as possible. The longer you wait, the lower the risk of adverse effects on your well-being.

02 Start low and go slow.

Choose lower potency THC.

Frequent use of products with higher THC content raises the risk of health problems such as dependence, severe vomiting, psychosis, or adverse events like rapid heart rate, paranoia, or anxiety. If you use cannabis, choose low-THC products, such as those with a more traditional THC levels (less than 10% for flower or 5 mg or less for edibles – ask retailers to carry it if they have stopped stocking it). A higher ratio of CBD to THC may also help counteract THC's adverse effects. Check product labels for THC and CBD content.

03 Use less often.

The more frequently you use cannabis, especially high-THC products, the more likely you are to develop health problems. Avoid bingeing, daily, or near daily use. Limiting to occasional use such as once a week or on weekends lowers your health risks. If you develop health problems such as impaired cognition or anxiety,

use cannabis less frequently, use less potent products, or suspend use.

04 Be patient with edibles.

Novice users should start with half a serving and wait 4-6 hours before consuming any more, even if you don't feel any effects right away. Eating too much can lead to vomiting, panic attacks, or sudden changes in your heart rate.

05 Buy legal.

For greater safety, use only legal, tested, quality-controlled products and devices to avoid toxic contaminants such as microbes, heavy metals, pesticides, and residual solvents.

06 Watch out with concentrates.

When cannabis flowers are smoked or vaporized, the effects are usually immediate, peak within one hour, and then gradually wear off. When cannabis concentrates such as shatter, distillate used for vaping, or wax are inhaled, the immediate effects are much more intense, and the risk of adverse events is much higher, especially for new users.

07 Get help if you need it.

Cannabis dependence is real. Seek help from your healthcare provider or mental health counselors if you think cannabis use is harming your work, school, or family life; if you can't control your cannabis use; or if you experience withdrawal symptoms when you try to stop using.

08 Look out for others.

Cannabis use, like alcohol or tobacco use, can cause serious harm to others, such as from impaired judgment or control, automobile accidents from driving while intoxicated, or second-hand exposure to cannabis smoke. Generally, you cannot smoke cannabis anywhere you are not allowed to smoke tobacco. Store cannabis, especially edibles, safely out of reach of children.

09 Consider your family history.

If there is a history of mental illness such as schizophrenia, mood disorders like depression, or substance use disorders, you may be at greater risk for these issues from frequent cannabis use. Consider abstaining or using cautiously, and avoid using cannabis with alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.

10 Be aware of legal risks for immigrants.

Using or possessing cannabis or working in the cannabis industry is still legally risky for any non-citizen, even in California. This includes lawful permanent residents, undocumented persons, students with visas, and others. Cannabis remains illegal under federal law, and federal law controls immigration.

IMPORTANT HEALTH WARNINGS ABOUT CANNABIS

DO NOT USE CANNABIS IF PREGNANT OR BREASTFEEDING.

Substances in cannabis are transferred from mother to child and may harm your baby's health, including causing low birth weight and developmental problems.



Cannabis use is **associated with increased risk of mental health problems, including of psychosis and schizophrenia** and increased thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts; risk is greatest for frequent users and when using products with high THC content.

Smoking cannabis long-term may **make breathing problems worse**, and vaping has been associated with serious lung disease.



Prolonged use of cannabis may cause **recurrent, severe nausea and vomiting.**



DRIVING WHILE HIGH IS A DUI.

Cannabis use increases your risk of motor vehicle crashes.

NOT FOR KIDS OR TEENS!

Starting cannabis use young or using frequently may lead to problem use and, according to the Surgeon General, may harm the developing teen brain.

