

# TIPS FOR PARENTS

May 21, 2015

**No matter their age, here are some steps to keep children safe around marijuana.**

## **WHAT SHOULD I KNOW TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE, EVEN IF THERE IS NO MARIJUANA IN MY HOME?**

Talk to young children about not eating or drinking anything without permission. This is important for when they are at other people's homes.

## **WHAT SHOULD I KNOW TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE IF I PLAN TO USE MARIJUANA?**

**Make sure there is another person who can safely care for children.** It is not safe for anyone who is high to take care of children.

**Do not allow smoking in your home or around children.** Marijuana smoke is not healthy. It has many of the same cancer-causing chemicals as tobacco smoke.

**Being high or even buzzed can make some activities more dangerous.**

- Driving a car while high is not safe for the driver or passengers. Tell children and teens not to ride in a car if the driver is high.
- It is not safe for young children to sleep in bed with you, especially if you are high.

## **HOW CAN I STORE MARIJUANA SAFELY?**

**Store all marijuana products in a locked area.** Make sure children cannot see or reach the locked area. Keep marijuana in the child-resistant packaging from the store.

**How you store marijuana should change as children get older.** Safe storage around young children may not stop older children or teens.

## **WHAT HAPPENS IF CHILDREN EAT OR DRINK MARIJUANA BY ACCIDENT?**



Marijuana can make children very sick. Look for problems walking or sitting up, starting to be sleepy or having a hard time breathing.

**If you are worried, call the poison control hotline as soon as possible.** Calling is free and you will be helped quickly.

If symptoms seem bad, call 911 or go to an emergency room right away.

## **BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL FOR CHILDREN.**

Set a good example and create a safe environment.

Actions speak louder than words. Do not use marijuana, alcohol or other substances around children.



## **NEED TIPS ANSWERING TOUGH QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR OWN USE?**

VISIT:  
[SPEAKNOW  
COLORADO.ORG](http://SPEAKNOW.COLORADO.ORG)

## **TALK TO YOUTH ABOUT MARIJUANA TO HELP THEM BETTER UNDERSTAND THE RISKS**

**Listen carefully and stay positive.** Keep the conversation open so they can come to you with questions. Knowing they can ask you questions helps youth make good decisions for their future.

*What you talk about may depend on how old they are.*

## **TALK ABOUT HOW MARIJUANA DAMAGES THEIR GROWING BRAINS**

- Marijuana can make it harder to learn, sometimes weeks after quitting.
- Problems with learning increase as more marijuana is used.
- Youth who start using marijuana are more likely to become addicted in the future.

*Encourage youth to protect their brains by not using marijuana.*

## **TALK ABOUT HOW MARIJUANA CAN GET IN THE WAY OF THEIR GOALS**

Ask about their dreams and help them connect with what they need to achieve them.

**Be honest.** Explain how doing well in school and staying out of trouble can help them reach their goals.

Talk about how marijuana can get youth in trouble:

- **Breaking family and community rules:** Set clear rules for youth. Share that younger siblings and neighbors see them as role models, so they should not use marijuana.
- **Breaking school or after school activity rules:** Youth may be referred for drug counseling, suspended, expelled or face prosecution.
- **Breaking Colorado laws:** Youth may get a Minor in Possession charge. This can lead to fines, public service, substance abuse education, loss of a driver's license and misdemeanor or felony charges.
- **Breaking federal laws:** Since marijuana is still illegal outside Colorado, youth with marijuana charges may not get financial aid to help pay for college.

Visit [SpeakNowColorado.org](https://SpeakNowColorado.org) for warning signs of high-risk behavior and useful talking tips to help youth make healthy choices.

### **RESOURCES:**

- For more information on marijuana in Colorado, including laws, methods of use and health effects, visit [Colorado.gov/Marijuana](https://Colorado.gov/Marijuana).
- For specific tips on age-appropriate ways to talk to youth, suggested talking points and how to spot high-risk behaviors, visit [SpeakNowColorado.org](https://SpeakNowColorado.org).
- To access Colorado substance abuse treatment professionals, visit [LinkingCare.org](https://LinkingCare.org), or call 1-800-CHILDREN for additional resources.
- For more information on the laws and consequences for youth marijuana use, visit [bit.ly/CDE\\_under21penalties](https://bit.ly/CDE_under21penalties).



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