

How Cannabis use affects your ...

MARIJUANA

Myth Busting

AND YOU!

1 Mental Health:

- Increases risk of anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts.
- Heavy use is linked to psychosis and schizophrenia.
- Youth with a family history of mental illness face greater risks.

2 Physical Health:

- Can impair lung health, especially when smoked.
- May affect heart rate and blood pressure.
- Long-term use can impact memory, focus, and learning.

3 Brain Function:

- THC affects brain development, particularly in young people.
- Can impair judgment, coordination, and reaction time.



**KNOW THE FACTS
PROTECT YOUR HEALTH**

“Weed’s natural, it can’t mess with your mind”

Regular use can lead to anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts, especially if you struggle with mental health.

“Only hard drugs cause psychosis or schizophrenia”

Heavy marijuana use is linked to both psychosis and schizophrenia, especially if you have pre-existing mental health issues

“It helps my anxiety and depression”

It might feel that way short-term, but it doesn’t treat the root issue and can make things worse over time.

“Drugs only affect your body, not your mental health”

Substance misuse impacts brain chemistry, mood, and behavior—often triggering or worsening mental health challenges.



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How to talk to your kids about drugs

Base drug and alcohol-related messages on **facts, not fear**. Kids love to **learn facts**. You can take advantage of their passion for learning to **reinforce your message** about drugs.

Talk to your pediatrician or the school's student counselor. They are a great resource for current information on **how to start the conversation** about drugs.

Encourage **healthy, creative activities**. Look for ways to get your child involved in sports, **hobbies, school clubs, and other activities** that reduce boredom and excess free time.

Keep your conversations in "present tense." Teens are concerned about the present. Ex) "marijuana can impair your ability to perform your favorite sport or activities."

MARIJUANA CAN BE ADDICTIVE!



KNOW THE FACTS PROTECT YOUR HEALTH



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COALITION

Actions You Can Take Instead:

Find alternative ways to socialize

Sports, art, music, or volunteering can offer belonging without the risks.

Challenge the Narrative

Understand that traditions evolve. Not all cultural practices need to include harmful habits.

Set Personal Boundaries

It's okay to say no and still be part of the group. Having a simple response like, "I don't smoke, but I'd love to hang out," can help.

Reflect on Your Values

Ask yourself: Does this choice align with who I want to be?

Find Strength in Spiritual Practices

Meditation, prayer, or journaling can help with stress instead of turning to substances.

Seek Guidance

Talk to a trusted elder, mentor, or religious leader about making choices that align with your beliefs.

For more information on available support or resources, call 211 or visit linktr.ee/ameasdrcc
If you need to talk to someone about your marijuana use call (888) 724-7240 or (800)-300-8086

How Tobacco & Hookah Affect Youth Health

Tobacco, Nicotine, And You!

1

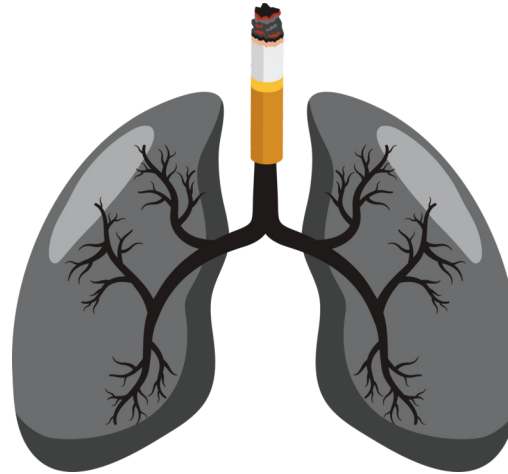
Nicotine isn't just a "mild stimulant." It changes how your brain works—affecting memory, focus, emotional regulation, and increasing your risk of anxiety and depression.

2

Even occasional hookah or vape use can lead to addiction. Starting young makes it harder to quit and can lead to stronger substance use later.

3

The brain is still developing until about the age of 25; nicotine and tobacco exposure during this time can lead to long-lasting changes in brain structure and function.



**KNOW THE FACTS
PROTECT YOUR HEALTH**

Hookah is not safer

One hookah session can expose you to as many toxic chemicals as 100 cigarettes.

Myth Busting

"Nicotine can help you relax and stay"

Nicotine hits fast, but fades quickly. Regular use rewires the brain, causing cravings, addiction and withdrawals.

"Smoking can help with managing stress."

It may feel calming at first, but over time nicotine increases anxiety. It just masks the feeling temporarily.

"Smoking can help with depression."

Nicotine triggers a short dopamine boost, but long-term reduces your brain's natural ability to feel good.

"Secondhand smoke is only harmful from cigarettes."

Hookah is more toxic, with charcoal and tobacco. Indoors, it can harm kids, family, and unborn babies.



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How to Avoid Substance Use & Abuse

Having open conversations with **trusted family** members about stress, identity, and healthy coping strategies can **strengthen** relationships and **reduce the temptation** to use substances.

Taking care of your well-being is an act of strength and resilience—it allows you to lead, inspire, and build a brighter future for yourself and your community.

Some traditions emphasize mindfulness and discipline—using these values can help in making strong, health-conscious choices.

Find role models who reflect your cultural background and have made positive choices. Surround yourself with friends and mentors who support your growth and success.

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If you need to talk to someone about your tobacco or nicotine use, call 800-300-8086 or visit kickitca.org