

DO YOU SPEAK CANNABIS?

Information and talking points to allow **parents** to broach the subject of cannabis and other drugs with their child

Cannabis is a drug derived from a plant with the same name.

Even though cannabis is a natural product, it is not harmless. Using it may have many negative health effects.

It comes in different forms, including:



DRIED PLANT

buds, grass, marijuana, pot, weed



SOLID CONCENTRATED EXTRACTS

hashish, resin, dabs (wax, shatter)



LIQUID CONCENTRATED EXTRACTS

resin oil, cartridges for e-cigarettes, oil for oral administration



EDIBLES

brownies, cookies, chocolate, infusions, etc.



AND WHAT ABOUT LEGALIZATION?

The primary aim of legalizing cannabis is to protect people's health. This legislative framework aims to better control the risks associated with use, which the current model of prohibition has not done successfully. However, legalizing cannabis is not an incentive to use it.

Cannabis possession continues to be illegal for people younger than 18 years.

Some ideas and tips on talking about cannabis

- ▶ Don't hesitate to broach the subject. Do some research and get ready for your discussion.
- ▶ Find a good place and time for your conversation.
- ▶ Ask your child's opinion about legalized cannabis or the choices of people of their age. Acknowledge your child's point of view. This does not mean that you must agree with what they say.
- ▶ Listen and accept their silences; these are good times for reflection.
- ▶ Clearly express your expectations regarding the use of cannabis.
- ▶ Remain open and available to your child. Your child will know that they can turn to you when they need you.



For more ideas, visit encadrementcannabis.gouv.qc.ca/le-cannabis/conseils-aux-parents-d-adolescents.

MOST TEENS DON'T USE

According to the data from the Québec Survey of Smoking, Alcohol, Drugs and Gambling in High School Students, fewer and fewer teens are using substances.

2000	2013
71% had not used tobacco products	88% had not used tobacco products
29% had not drunk alcohol	43% had not drunk alcohol
60% had not used cannabis	77% had not used cannabis

The high-school students who had used cannabis did so mainly as an experiment (once to try it out) and use it only occasionally (less than or around once a month).

YOUR ATTITUDE AS A PARENT IS KEY YOUR OPINION COUNTS, EVEN IF YOUR CHILD DOESN'T ADMIT THIS TO YOU

As your child's role model, your behaviour speaks loudest. If you use, you can offer an example of responsible use by showing your child that neither alcohol nor any drug is a cure all for fatigue or daily tensions.

If you have ever used drugs, ask yourself whether or not you feel the need to share this with your child. Substances and contexts for use have changed dramatically over the past few decades.

If you are currently using, remember that actions speak louder than words. What's your relationship with tobacco, alcohol or cannabis? How large of a place does it have in your life? Even if it's not easy, you can talk to your child about your concerns about your own use. You will gain their respect and trust.

SIGNS OF PROBLEMATIC USE

Young people use drugs primarily for fun, out of curiosity or to be part of a group. Any use at this age poses greater risks than in adults. For those who use a lot, this may be a way of forgetting or masking problems and of escaping their pain. This is when recreational use can become abuse, leading to physical effects and impacting their interpersonal relationships.

Keep an eye on the repeated or extended presence of one or more of these signs:

- ▶ loss of appetite or increased snacking;
- ▶ loss of interest (school, sports, friends, etc.);
- ▶ emotional changes (mood swings, aggressivity, laughing for no apparent reason);
- ▶ physical changes (eye redness, dry mouth, sniffing);
- ▶ sleep disturbances;
- ▶ increased secretiveness and isolation.

If you think your child is using

You will probably be overcome with a flood of emotions. Be the first to broach the subject calmly. You can express your concerns without being judgmental or critical. Tell your child that you are concerned about their welfare.

Try to understand the reasons compelling them to use and thank them for confiding in you. Your role is to set limits and to communicate your expectations:

- ▶ Clearly express your disagreement with cannabis use and share your concerns about it;
- ▶ Talk about the risks associated with impaired driving. No one should drive if they've used alcohol or cannabis.
- ▶ Discuss ways to reduce the possible negative consequences of cannabis use.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

TEENS

- ▶ High-school counsellors
- ▶ Youth-centre counsellors
- ▶ Tel-Jeunes (teljeunes.com / 1 800 263-266)
- ▶ Info-Social (call 8-1-1)
- ▶ Psychosocial services offered by the CLSC at your local CI(U)SSS

PARENTS

- ▶ Ligne Parents (ligneparents.com / 1 800 361-5085)
- ▶ Info-Social (call 8-1-1)
- ▶ Psychosocial services offered by the CLSC at your local CI(U)SSS
- ▶ Family program offered by the addiction rehabilitation services at your local CI(U)SSS

For further information: encadrementcannabis.gouv.qc.ca