# Health Risks of Recreational Marijuana

**How Marijuana Can Affect Your Health**

Studies show that marijuana is harmful to health. Reports about negative public health effects are coming from other states, like Colorado and Washington State, where recreational marijuana is already legal.

**It’s most dangerous for kids and young adults**

More and more teens think that marijuana is safe to use. It’s not.

* Kids will have more access to marijuana if it’s legalized. Even though the ballot question would make marijuana legal only for people 21 and older, more marijuana in the state makes it easier for people under 21 to get and use marijuana.
* Kids who use marijuana are even more likely to be harmed by marijuana than adults. They’re more likely to get addicted, and because their brains are still developing—until they’re in their 20s—marijuana is more harmful to their brains.
* Kids who use marijuana are more likely to have problems with attention and problems in school.

**Edibles are especially dangerous.**

Edibles are food and drinks that contain marijuana and would be legal if the ballot question passes.

* It’s easier to overdose on edibles. A small piece of chocolate or candy can contain a strong amount of marijuana and people often eat more than one piece.
* Marijuana lollipops, brownies, sodas and other sweets appeal to kids and teens.
* Young children, including toddlers, have had to be taken to the emergency room for marijuana exposure after eating candy or other edibles containing marijuana.

**Marijuana is much stronger today than it used to be.**

This means that it can cause much more serious health problems than it did 20 or 30 years ago.

**Addiction**

* About 9% of people who try marijuana become addicted.
* About 17% of teenagers who try marijuana will become addicted.
* 25% to 50% of people who use marijuana daily will become addicted.

**Effects on the Brain**

* including memory and attention problems, drops in IQ, particularly in adolescents and young adults.

**Motor vehicle accidents**

* In states where recreational marijuana is legal, traffic accidents and deaths related to marijuana go up.

For more information about the health effects of marijuana, visit

**www.massmed.org/marijuana**

[](http://www.massmed.org/Default.aspx) *Every physician matters, each patient counts*