



Early Marijuana Use has Serious Risks

Scientists at Western University in Canada discovered evidence that early marijuana use has serious risks. [Science Daily](#) reported on research measuring the effects of teen marijuana use. As a result of teen cannabis use participants showed abnormal brain function and lower IQ. This study supports the overwhelming research findings that early marijuana use has serious risks when used on a regular basis.

If your teen tries to convince you that cannabis possesses no risks and is even healthful, you should be very wary. Researchers have concluded that regular use of marijuana should never be ignored because it damages adolescents and their developing brains.

What Does the Research Say?

Previous studies have concluded that frequent early marijuana use showed a high risk for a number of mental health problems including; cognitive dysfunction, depression, bipolar disorder and even schizophrenia (where there is a family history). In this study, the researchers (Osuch, 2016) recruited four testing groups including individuals who started using cannabis before age 17 and those who didn't.

The four specific groups include:

- Those with depression who were frequent marijuana users
- Depressed individuals who were not marijuana users
- Frequent marijuana users without depression
- Non-depressed individuals who were not marijuana users

Research in Action

These findings (Osuch, 2016) consistently show that early marijuana use contributes to lower IQ scores. In addition, Osuch found that participants who used marijuana from a young age had 'highly abnormal brain function,' including difficulties in the areas of visual-spatial processing, memory, self-referential activity and reward processing. A significant finding is that the longer a teen waits to experiment with drugs, the less damage one would expect. Additionally, research has shown that there is much less risk to individuals who abstain until at least age 26.

When teens start experimenting with marijuana, parents should be aware of the serious risks. Some of the damage may be irreversible. A parent who finds their 13-17 year old with marijuana should seriously consider an assessment.

If your teenager is using a substance or is in possession of marijuana, alcohol, or another illegal drug, take [this survey](#), which was designed to help determine if your child could benefit from an assessment. ASAP can help get you and your child on the road to recovery. It all starts with a phone call to 513.792.1271.