



**KNOW THE**

**FACTS**

# **ABOUT ALCOHOL & MARIJUANA**



**There is no safe amount of alcohol or marijuana for young people. In the US, it's illegal to buy, possess, or consume alcohol or marijuana until you are 21, and marijuana is still illegal federally, and in many states, regardless of age.**

Alcohol, marijuana, and other substance use can affect health, safety and many other aspects of a teenager's life like school and relationships.

# ALCOHOL *FACTS*

Alcohol is a toxin and a depressant, meaning it can slow down the central nervous system and activity in the brain.

## HARMFUL EFFECTS INCLUDE:



Motor vehicle accidents and injuries, such as burns or drowning school, social and legal problems, such as lower grades, fights, violence, harming another person, arrest.



Unwanted, unplanned, and unprotected sexual activity.



Alcohol poisoning or overdose which can lead to death.



Hangovers and more frequent illnesses.



Increased risk of suicide.



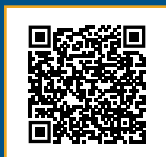
## ALCOHOL & THE *BRAIN*

THE BRAIN IS STILL DEVELOPING until at least age 25 A, especially the pre-frontal cortex which is the part of the brain responsible for judgement, decision-making and impulse control. Drinking as a teenager can impact this for life.

ALCOHOL CAN HARM THE HIPPOCAMPUS, an important part of the brain for memory and learning.

ALCOHOL CAN HARM THE NUCLEUS ACCUMBENS, which plays a part of the brain's reward pathway. When the brain is flooded with dopamine by drinking, the brain may struggle to make dopamine on its own.

Learn more here:



# WHAT IS *BINGE DRINKING*

Binge drinking is a pattern of drinking that brings blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08 percent or higher which results in intoxication.

## Binge Drinking in Adolescents

	Age	Number Of Drinks Consumed In About 2 Hours
<b>FEMALES</b>	<b>9-17</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>MALES</b>	<b>9-13</b>	<b>3</b>
	<b>14-15</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>16-17</b>	<b>5</b>

**⚠ IMPORTANT:** It takes less alcohol to become intoxicated in people assigned female at birth compared to people assigned male at birth.

## *DANGERS* OF BINGE DRINKING

- Getting intoxicated “drunk” rapidly
- Slurred speech
- Delayed reaction time
- Slowed breathing
- Slowed brain functioning
- Blackouts (not remembering things)
- Unconsciousness
- Death

## Alcohol poisoning is an emergency

It can shut down the parts of the brain that control breathing and heart rate and lead to loss of consciousness, permanent brain damage and even death.

- 1 Act quickly and seek medical care immediately.**  
Colorado law protects people from some criminal charges, such as low-level drug possession and use, or a minor in possession, if they seek help for a medical emergency.

- 2 Stay with the person**  
(do not leave them alone!)  
Keep the person on the ground and roll them to one side to prevent choking.



Learn more here:



Marijuana (cannabis, weed, bud, or pot) is the dried flowers and leaves of the cannabis plant, and is a mind-altering substance. The chemical in marijuana that makes you feel high is  $\Delta$ -9 THC (Delta 9 Tetrahydrocannabinol). People experience the effects differently based on the marijuana strain and their body chemistry. THC and other chemicals found in marijuana can harm brain development and lead to:

- **Learning and memory problems**, even 28 days after last use.
- Future cannabis use disorder (**addiction** to marijuana).
- Daily/near-daily use in some adolescents may lead to developing **psychosis**.



**Quitting marijuana can lower the risk of developing cognitive or mental health disorders later in life.**

- Smoked (joints, blunts, pipes, or bongs)
- Consumed as edibles (gummies, chocolates, baked goods) or drinks (brewed in teas, sodas, sparkling drinks)
- Vaped (e-cigarettes, vape pens)
- Dabbed (dab, hash oil, wax, shatter)

- Research has not yet determined a safe amount of marijuana.
- Frequent use (weekly or more often) can harm health and other areas of life.
- Marijuana IS addictive. A person will need more and more to get the same effects. It may become difficult to cut back or quit.
- Marijuana can contain harmful chemicals, metals and oils.
- Marijuana can be laced with or include other drugs.
- Synthetic "marijuana" is NOT marijuana. Common names are, Spice, K2, Joker, Black Mamba, Kush and Kronoc. In Colorado, it's illegal. The product is not plant-based but is manufactured in a lab from chemicals.

**Learn more here:**



## **⚠ Not using alcohol or marijuana is the safest choice.**

But, if you do, here are tips for less harmful use:



**Never mix alcohol with any other drugs (including marijuana).** It can be dangerous and lead to becoming more impaired than when you use just one substance.



**Plan ahead!** Create a safety plan in case you're in a place where you or someone else could be drinking or using marijuana, or where you may feel unsafe. Make a plan with your parents, another trusted adult or even a friend. Arrange for a sober driver to pick you up.

- Have a code word that tells your friends or ride you are ready to leave.
- Tell others where you will be.
- Create a pact with a friend to look out for each other.

## *SAFER USE* ALCOHOL

- Never binge drink. Drink no more than one drink per hour.
- Don't drive a car or ride a bike or scooter after drinking or ride with someone who has been drinking. Get home safe with a designated driver, Uber/Lyft or a taxi.
- Avoid drinking games. They encourage drinking a large amount in a short amount of time (aka binge drinking) and can lead to a high level of intoxication.
- Watch what and how much is poured into your cup. Don't leave your drink unattended or accept drinks from other people.
- Don't drink on an empty stomach. Be sure to sip on plenty of water throughout the time you are drinking.
- Don't drink in a place where you feel unsafe. Practice conversations with your friends about how to leave when you feel unsafe.
- Stay with your friends. Noonlight, an app available on the App Store or Google Play can silently summon help to your exact location with the tap of a button, and save details to your Timeline, like who, when, and where you're meeting, just in case anything happens.

# TIPS FOR SAFER USE

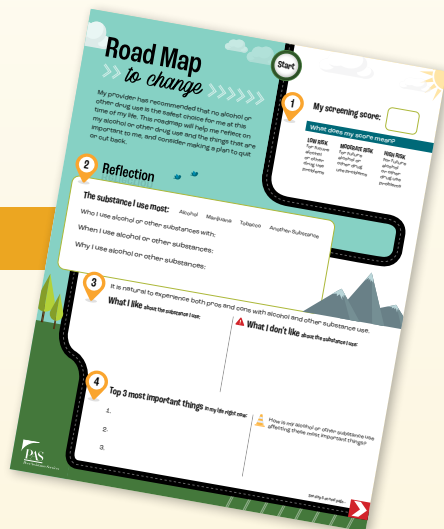
## SAFER USE MARIJUANA

- Be aware of the potency (THC level) in the marijuana you are using and choose the lowest level. Marijuana dabs and concentrates have much higher THC levels.
- Don't drive a car or ride a bike or skateboard or ride a scooter after using, or ride with someone who has used marijuana.  
\*In Colorado, you can get a DUI for using marijuana and then driving a vehicle, bike or scooter AND when skiing or snowboarding (Colorado Ski Act).
- Keep track of your use. You can use your phone or anything that works for you. (Use that occurs weekly or more (i.e., daily) increases your risk of becoming addicted).
- Be aware of changes in your mental health. Over time, marijuana can make mental health worse, not better. For example, increased anxiety or depression, decreased motivation.
- Because the effects of marijuana are stronger and last longer when eaten as edibles compared to smoking it, even ingesting small amounts can take much longer before the effects kick in and can have effects that last 8-10 hours.
- Keep marijuana away from pets and young children, such as younger siblings to prevent accidental exposures or poisoning.

## READY TO MAKE A CHANGE



Download the Road Map to Change worksheet to reflect on your alcohol or other drug use and make a plan to quit or cut back.



# RESOURCES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Add these phone numbers to your contacts in case you or someone you know is in crisis or needs support.



**The Trevor Project** The Trevor Project: Provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer & questioning (LGBTQ) youth under 25.



**My Life, My Quit** A free and confidential way for Colorado youth to get help for smoking, vaping, chewing, or other tobacco whether you want to cut back, quit for the first time, try again, or just get more information. Text "Start My Quit" to 36072 to chat with a coach.



**Forward Together** A movement by youth in Colorado to help young people connect, share stories on pushing through challenges, and show that you're not alone.



**Responsibility Grow's Here** Learn more here about marijuana and the effects of underage use on health.

## RESOURCES TO SHARE WITH PARENTS, CAREGIVERS, AND TRUSTED ADULTS



**Women's Health and Alcohol App** Designed for women to learn more on the impact alcohol can have on physical, mental, and social well-being. App users interact with Maria, a virtual Nurse Practitioner.



**One Degree Shift the Influence** empowers each of us to be the influence and help change the lives of those we care about.



**National Institute on Drug Abuse** Get information to help you talk with your teens about drugs and their effects and learn where to go to get help..



**Twelve Talks** Communicate with your teenager and connect them with resources to help them thrive.

# CRISIS RESOURCES

**Colorado Crisis Services** is available to those of any age struggling with feelings of isolation, stress, anxiety, and depression related to school, drugs, alcohol, and relationships. See below for different ways to connect to a mental health professional who will provide confidential and immediate support and connections to further resources. The following services are free and open 24/7:

- Colorado Crisis Services Line: **Call 1-844-493-TALK (8255)**
- Colorado Crisis Text Service: **Text the word TALK to 38255**

**988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline** The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support to people in crisis or distress and are considering suicide. They also offer resources for you or your loved ones.

**Dial 988** if you are concerned about yourself or someone else having thoughts of suicide.



**It is okay to ask for help** if you're struggling with substance use or your mental health or know someone else who is. Minors (those under 18) at any age can seek substance use treatment in Colorado without parents or guardians finding out. Those age 12 and older can seek some types of mental health services without a parent or guardian, for example counseling.