

# #3 Student MJ Q&A

## 3. Health effects:

- a. **Can marijuana kill you?** Historically, marijuana with low amounts of the psychoactive chemical THC were not generally associated with overdose; however, newer marijuana products with a high level of THC have resulted in overdose requiring emergency room visits. So far, people do not, generally, die from THC overdose but can die or be seriously injured from poor decisions made while under the influence of marijuana/THC. There are reports of people sometimes having lasting negative effects on their mental health from the use of high potency THC products.
- b. **Is weed actually bad for you?** Yes, marijuana is never good for teens to use. The brain continues to develop until close to 25 years of age. Studies show that regular use of marijuana has negative effects on the teen brain.
- c. **What are the main negative health effects?**

Brain Regions Affected by Marijuana/THC and the Associated Effects

	Hippocampus	Basal Ganglia and Cerebellum	Cerebral Cortex
Impaired Functions	Learning and memory: These effects can cause problems with studying, learning new things, and recalling recent events. Heavy use by teens may be associated with reduced IQ.	Balance, coordination, and movement: These effects can influence performance in such activities as sports, driving, and video games.	Judgment: These effects can cause you to make poor decisions and do things you might not do when you are not under the influence of marijuana/THC.  Difficulty with thinking and problem solving; changes in perceptions.
Other Potential Effects on Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased risk for mental health problems including psychosis, depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts;</li> <li>• Increased heart rate, in some cases doubled;</li> <li>• Respiratory (lung and breathing) problems</li> </ul>		

(Adapted From: The National Institute on Drug Abuse Blog Team. Marijuana Retrieved from <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/marijuana> on January 19, 2017)

- d. **Will question 4 affect student's academics?** If students use marijuana regularly, yes, scientific studies show that this can cause reduced motivation, IQ, and academic success.
- e. **Is it worse than alcohol?** Neither alcohol nor marijuana are healthy or safe for teens to use. Both alcohol and marijuana impair judgement and make it more likely that the user will find themselves in negative situations. Although both negatively affect brain development of teens, alcohol in excess can result in death.
- f. **Is it more dangerous to eat edibles or smoke?** Both smoking marijuana and eating edibles containing marijuana (or the psychoactive chemical in marijuana, THC) can have negative consequences, especially if driving under the influence. The way in which the active chemical, THC, is absorbed varies depending on the way in which marijuana is used. Ingestion of marijuana/THC products results in delayed absorption of THC into the bloodstream and brain making overdose/overuse more likely.
- g. **How can you tell if your friend is doing marijuana?** Marijuana has a distinctive smell. If you suspect that a friend is using marijuana, talk to your friend and/or to a trusted adult. Marijuana can be addictive and can have negative effects on physical and mental health.



 **S T A N D**