

# Cannabis Legalization

## What Parents/Guardians and Caregivers Need to Know

**CANNABIS WILL BE LEGALIZED IN ONTARIO  
ON OCTOBER 17, 2018.**

### What does cannabis legalization mean for youth?

When cannabis is legalized on October 17, 2018, the Ontario Government will be ready with rules that keep cannabis out of the hands of children and youth, and keep our roads safe. In Ontario, adults who are 19 years or older will be able to buy and use recreational cannabis purchased from government-regulated Ontario Cannabis Stores and face strict penalties for giving cannabis to minors, similar to alcohol and tobacco. For youth under the age of 19 in Ontario, it will be illegal to grow, possess, buy, sell or share cannabis, as well as zero tolerance for impaired driving.

### Where will it be used?

According to proposed legislation, consuming recreational and medicinal cannabis will be permitted in public places, with some restrictions. Cannabis use in schools or where children gather (ex. playgrounds and sports fields) will be prohibited. Students under the influence of cannabis or possessing cannabis in schools, will face progressive discipline and serve a suspension/expulsion, as needed.

Even after recreational cannabis becomes legal for adults over 19 years of age, most Ontario students (62%) in Grades 7-12 say that they do not have plans to try cannabis.

## What are the unique risks of cannabis use for youth?

Trying cannabis is unlikely to cause serious problems, but even occasional use has harms. Some risks include:

- Increased risk of harm to the brain, such as problems with memory, concentration, thinking, learning, handling emotions, and decision-making.
- Increased risk of mental health problems, such as psychosis or schizophrenia and, possibly, depression, anxiety and suicide, especially if there's a personal or family history of mental illness.
- Difficulties with relationships, at home, school or work.
- Physical health harms, including lung and respiratory problems.
- Cannabis can be addictive, especially for youth.
- Driving after using cannabis may double the risk of having a car accident.

## What are the signs my child may have a problem with cannabis or other substances?

- Ignoring responsibilities at work, school, or home.
- Giving up activities that they used to find important or enjoyable.
- Using more cannabis, more frequently and/or unable to cut down or control cannabis use.
- Changes in mood, e.g., feeling irritable and paranoid.
- Having difficulties with family members.
- Being secretive or dishonest.
- Changing sleep habits, appetite, or other behaviors.
- Borrowing money or having more money than usual.
- It is sometimes hard to detect a problem with cannabis use. Some signs of a cannabis problem can look like typical youth behaviour.

### What can I do to prevent cannabis from harming my child?

**It is important to stay connected with your child at a time when they may want to pull away. Have open, ongoing talks so your child is aware of the effects and risks of cannabis.**

**Be prepared with the facts about cannabis so that you can respond to questions they may have. Focusing on safety and getting more information is a great way to start.**

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**DRUGFREEKIDSCANADA.ORG**  
**ONTARIO.CA/CANNABIS**  
**SMH-ASSIST.CA/BLOG/CANNABIS-INFO-SHEET/**