

YOUR KIDS KNOW WHAT “420” MEANS... DO YOU?

When youth talk about “420” they probably don’t mean the date Apollo 16 landed on the moon or Michael Jordan setting an NBA playoff record. They’re probably referring to “National Weed Day,” which has been gaining momentum since the early 70’s. Although this *holiday* isn’t marked on the calendar, it is celebrated by some people who smoke marijuana. It might be difficult to recognize, but there are many signs and symptoms that may suggest your child is engaged in “420” activities. Be in the know as this *holiday* will be celebrated by marijuana users around the globe. Be aware that “420” refers to not only April 20th but the everyday afternoon hour of 4:20pm, as well.

During **COVID-19**, we need to protect our lungs more than ever. Smoking a joint to commemorate April 20th irritates your lungs, and can have much more lasting consequences. Parents, while your kids are home, talk to them about concerns and consequences, and make it a priority to get involved and ask questions. **Remember, it’s parenting, not pestering!**

Some Facts on Marijuana:

- **Smoking marijuana can cause chronic respiratory issues.**
- Marijuana is a potent, **addictive** drug. THC (the psychoactive ingredient) levels in marijuana **have gone up** from 2-3% in the 1970’s to 15-18% but even greater today with up to 90% in edible, vaping, and oil concentrates
- Regular use leads to significant **withdrawal** symptoms like anxiety, depression and insomnia.
- Research shows regular marijuana use can **impair cognitive functioning**, causing a drop in IQ which can last into adulthood.
- Use of marijuana **directly affects the brain**, especially young developing brains, increasing risks for mental illness and psychosis.
- See more at <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/marijuana>

Medical Marijuana in New Jersey

With the recommendation of a licensed, registered doctor, it is legal in New Jersey to use marijuana for qualifying medical conditions. New Jersey has **NOT legalized marijuana for recreational use**. Many myths are associated with legalization of marijuana. More information can be found at www.learnaboutsam.com and <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/blog/post/how-legal-marijuana>

Signs & Symptoms of Youth

Marijuana Use:

- Decrease in grades/change in attitude
- Mood or personality changes/lying/blaming
- Change in friends/clothing choices
- Weight gain/loss
- Inappropriate laughter followed by sleepiness
- Loss of interest and decreased motivation
- Drug paraphernalia in bedroom, car or locker (pipes, rolling papers, lighters, one hitter, flavored cigars)
- Vaporizers (Vapes), oils, cartridges. USB chargers, wicks
- Use of incense, room deodorant and/or perfumes
- Blood shot eyes and use of eye drops

Vapes and E-Cigs

Vapes come in a variety of colors and styles-many look like USB, pens, or other small concealable devices with either refillable cartridges, or a disposable unit, that can be filled with liquid nicotine or THC or other oils. Not only are these addictive and harmful, but they can also be used to engage in marijuana smoking. Often these products smell like fruit or candy or can even be odorless and makes it very hard to detect drug use. Although product advertisements claim to encourage users to quit smoking, they are attracting more and more young people who never smoked to start. Like tobacco, these products are banned in all smoke-free areas.

To learn more about the **Prevention Coalition of Mercer County (PCMC)** please visit

www.mercercouncil.org/pcmc or contact PCMC@mercercouncil.org

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For more on talking to youth about marijuana, visit

<http://www.drugfree.org/MJTalkKit>