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# Study Says Casual Pot Use Harmful to Teens

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Recreational [marijuana](#) use by teenagers isn't as harmless as many people seem to think, even as it becomes increasingly legal in this country, authors of a new study say.

Teenagers who use cannabis recreationally are 2 to 3 times more likely to have [depression](#) and suicidal thoughts than those who don't use it. And teens who have cannabis use disorder – which means they can't stop using it despite health and social problems – are 4 times more likely to have those same thoughts and feelings.

The study was published in the [Journal of the American Medical Association \(JAMA\)](#). It looked at information from 68,000 teens in the National Survey on Drug Use and Health.

Marijuana use was also linked to other issues including not doing well in school, skipping school, and getting in trouble with the police.

"Kids, year by year, have been moving towards a view that marijuana is safe and benign — that's factually incorrect," lead author of the study, Ryan Sultan, MD, an assistant professor of clinical psychiatry at Columbia University, told [Yahoo Life](#).

The child psychiatrist said he was surprised that recreational users had a much higher risk of mental health issues. "We typically think of recreational use as not being a concerning behavior," he said.

The study did not seek to explain the link between mental health problems and cannabis use.

"The more you use it, the more it negatively affects your thinking. That's increasing the likelihood of depression and more suicidal thoughts," Sultan said. "It's feedback that spirals downward and gets to a place that really concerns us as child psychiatrists."

Sultan said parents should talk to their children about marijuana use, depression, and anxiety.

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## Sources

JAMA Network: "Nondisordered Cannabis Use Among US Adolescents."

Yahoo: "Casual marijuana use in teens isn't harmless. Here's why experts say parents should be 'very concerned.'"

Credit:

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