

Conversations matter: **cannabis**

Providing you with information to support youth in making informed decisions



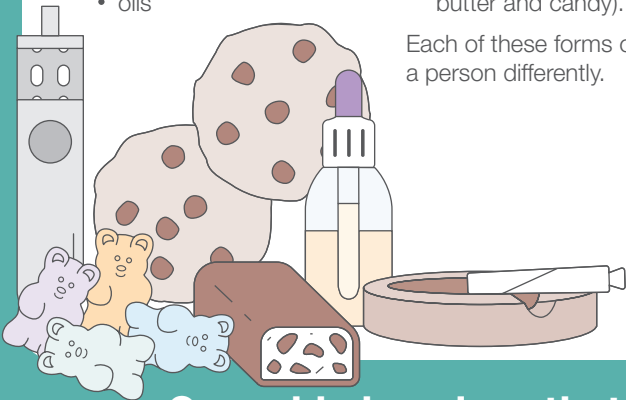
Talking to a young person in your life about cannabis can be awkward. But to keep young people safe, it is important to make sure they have as much information as possible. Here is some information about cannabis that you can use to start a conversation with youth, and help guide them to make informed choices about cannabis.

What is cannabis?

Cannabis is a plant that has psychoactive effects. Psychoactive means that it can change the way a person thinks, acts or feels. Cannabis comes in many forms, including:

- dried flowers or leaves
- hash
- oils
- capsules or pills
- edibles (e.g., baked goods, butter and candy).

Each of these forms can affect a person differently.



Risks of cannabis for youth

Young people under 16 who use cannabis regularly can develop health and social problems that may be long-lasting.

They include:

- harm to brain development, causing problems with memory, concentration and decision making
- increased risk of mental health problems such as depression, anxiety or psychosis
- difficulties with friends or family
- breathing problems
- physical dependence.



Delaying cannabis use until after adolescence will reduce the risks. The brain is not fully developed until the age of 25.

Cannabis is a drug that has particular risks for young people. Being a trusted and approachable adult can help keep them safe.

How can I keep the young people in my life safe?

Be supportive.

Young people may choose to use cannabis for many reasons, including to fit in. Help them develop ways to feel comfortable saying “no” if they want to.

Encourage safe use.

Help them understand when cannabis should be avoided, such as at school or work, and when driving.

Stay informed

about cannabis, and let the young people in your life know you are ready and open to answer any questions they may have.

Be available

and welcoming if a young person approaches you to talk about cannabis. Try to consider and respect the different ways they may feel about approaching you.

Encourage

young people to **set a limit** when using cannabis, and stick to it.



For more information about substance use and cannabis, visit:

www.camh.ca/talking-about-and-spotting-substance-abuse
www.camh.ca/thebluntruth

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