



# HOW TO RESPOND

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Once you've opened the conversation about cannabis with your teen, they may have questions or comments that are hard to address. Read through these frequent teen comments so you're prepared to respond in the moment.

### If a teen says, "But it's natural," you can say:

"Just because it's natural, it still doesn't mean it's safe for you to use. Your brain won't stop developing until you're in your mid-20s. Using weed now can impact your memory, stress, and anxiety."

**More info:** The THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) in cannabis can affect teen brains by impacting their memory, stress, and anxiety."<sup>1</sup>

### If a teen says, "But it's not as bad as tobacco or other drugs," you can say:

"As your brain develops, it is expertly fine-tuning its connections, and many substances—including cannabis—can disrupt the brain's developmental process."

**More info:** The developing brain fine-tunes connections in the brain's gray and white matter.<sup>2</sup> The science on THC and teens shows that it is possible THC can disrupt the brain's developmental process—how big an impact this may have on the teen brain is not yet clear"<sup>1</sup>

### If a teen says, "But it's legal," you can say:

"The legal age of cannabis use in California is 21 and above."

**More info:** Find out more about California's cannabis laws [here](#).

### If a teen says, "But vaping isn't harmful," you can say:

"Vaping with weed can still expose you to toxins that can affect your health."

**More info:** When vaping, your teen can still inhale toxic metals and chemicals from the heating chamber, which can affect their overall health.<sup>3</sup>

### If a teen says, "But so many successful people use it," you can say:

"What people post on social media doesn't show a full picture of their life. Cannabis could be causing problems for them that they're not even aware of. The best way to let your brain grow to its full potential is to avoid underage cannabis use."

**More info:** The teen brain does not stop developing until their mid-20s.<sup>1</sup>

**If a teen says, “But you used when you were young,” you can say:**

“Cannabis is stronger now than it used to be, which can affect your brain and may make cannabis addictive.”

**More info:** Cannabis today is stronger than in the past as it contains higher levels of THC, which can harm the teen brain and make cannabis addictive.<sup>1</sup>

**If a teen says, “But I saw you use,” you can say:**

“Using cannabis underage puts your brain development at risk. That means your memory, attention, coordination, and mental health could be affected.”

**More info:** Human brains do not fully develop until our mid-20s, and large amounts of THC in the brain can impact normal functions like learning, memory, attention, coordination, and mental health regulation.<sup>1</sup>



**Click here to learn more about cannabis health effects**

**Sources**

1. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2020). Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2020 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/release/2020-national-survey-drug-use-and-health-nsduh-releases>
2. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2017). The health effects of cannabis and cannabinoids: The current state of evidence and recommendations for research. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/24625>
3. Bonner, E., Chang, Y., Christie, E., Colvin, V., Cunningham, B., Elson, D., Ghetu, C., Huizenga, J., Hutton, S. J., Kolluri, S. K., Maggio, S., Moran, I., Parker, B., Rericha, Y., Rivera, B. N., Samon, S., Schwichtenberg, T., Shankar, P., Simonich, M. T., ...Tanguay, R. L. (2021). The chemistry and toxicology of vaping. *Pharmacology & Therapeutics*, 225, 107837. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pharmthera.2021.107837>