

You Need to Read This If You Smoked Pot As a Teen

The effects can remain into adulthood—even if you stopped lighting up

BY SUZANNAH WEISS *March 29, 2017*

The earlier you became a stoner, the more you may have to worry now: People who started smoking weed at a younger age tend to have worse health consequences later on[1], according to a new study published in the journal *Health*.

Concordia University researchers analyzed three surveys on substance use from the U.S. and Canada. They found that pot smokers were more likely to suffer from memory loss, mental illnesses, breathing problems, and some cancers. They also scored lower on IQ tests and didn't do as well in school.

Those who smoked daily or started before age 20—and particularly before age 15—experienced the most health problems, even if they'd stopped smoking.

“Our results show the damage is permanent,” the authors wrote in the study. “What teenagers use on average when they start to use marijuana imposes health costs on them for the rest of their lives.”

Teen smoking also predicted regular use into adulthood. Meanwhile, only .03 percent of people who smoked for the first time at age 21 or over continued to do so daily or almost daily.

Another recent University of Montreal study [2] found that only those who started smoking before age 17 still had cognitive impairments when they were 20.

These findings are in line with the Canadian Task Force on Cannabis Legalization and Regulation's recommendations to restrict use to adults, according to a press release [3]. Canada plans to legalize weed [4] in 2018, but only for those 18 and over, as we recently reported [5].

Still, the researchers admit a lot of uncertainty about the long-term effects of marijuana remains, possibly because there aren't a lot of studies that take place over an extended amount of time [6].

Source URL: <http://www.menshealth.com/health/marijuana-effects-teens>

Links:

[1] http://file.scirp.org/pdf/Health_2016112315353277.pdf

[2] <http://www.maxim.com/news/marijuana-study-teenagers-age-2017-1>

[3] https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2017-03/cu-euo032817.php

[4] <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/liberal-legal-marijuana-pot-1.4041902>

[5] <http://www.menshealth.com/guy-wisdom/marijuana-legal-canada>

[6] <http://www.menshealth.com/health/health-effects-of-marijuana-report>

[7] <http://www.menshealth.com/tags/health-news>

[8] <http://www.menshealth.com/tags/marijuana>