



Wakefield Police School Resource Officers

Monthly Safety Message – January 2018

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We wanted to take a minute and highlight some of the main concerns the Wakefield Police Department has about Marijuana within our community.

Marijuana



Marijuana is one of the most often-used drug in the U.S. The main CHEMICAL in marijuana is THC (Delta-9-Tetrahydrocannabinol). Of the roughly 400 chemicals found in the cannabis plant, THC affects the brain the most. It is a mind altering chemical that gives users a high. This drug has both short term and long effects on one's body. These short and long term effects include issues with memory, learning, depth perception (sight, sounds, time, touch and time), increase heart rate and anxiety. When Marijuana is mixed with other drugs prescribed or not prescribed can exacerbate these effects.

Strength and Potency

The amount of THC in marijuana has increased over the past few decades. In the early 1990s, the average THC content in marijuana was about 3.74 percent. In 2013, it was almost 10 percent, and much higher in some products such as oils and other extracts (see pics below). Scientists do not yet know what this increase in potency means for a person's health. However, Emergency Rooms across the country have seen an increase in patients seeking help after consuming high concentrations of THC. There symptoms range from paranoia, elevated heart rate, anxiety, and sometimes including psychosis (having false thoughts or seeing or hearing things that aren't there)

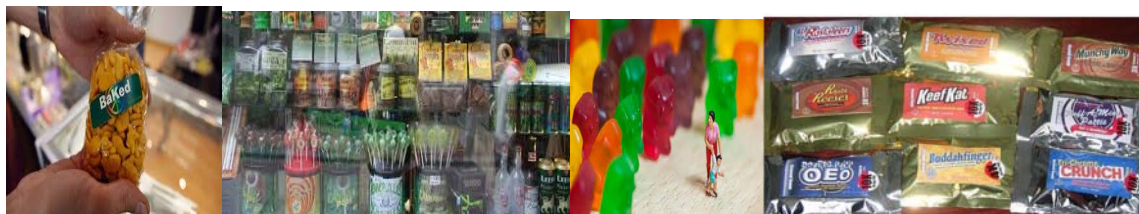
Marijuana Extracts

Smoking extracts and resins from the marijuana plant with high levels of THC is on the rise. There are several forms of these extracts, such as hash oil, budder, wax, and shatter. These resins have 3 to 5 times more THC than the plant itself. Smoking or vaping it (also called dabbing) can deliver dangerous amounts of THC to users. There have also been reports of people injured in fires and explosions caused by attempts to extract hash oil from marijuana leaves using butane (lighter fluid).



Edibles

Edibles are food products infused with marijuana. Edibles often time give a longer lasting high and usually are more potent high then smoking marijuana. Due to Edibles taken in larger dosages often times leads to anxiety attacks paranoia and hullucinations.



Marijuana and Youth

Marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug in the United States by teens as well as adults. Recent public discussions about medical marijuana and the public debate over the drug's legal status is leading to a reduced perception of harm among young people. In addition, some teens believe marijuana cannot be harmful because it is "natural." But not all natural plant substances are good for you—tobacco, cocaine, and heroin also come from plants.

Past studies have shown that when Youth's perception of Marijuana being harmful is down that Marijuana usage actually goes up. The following are some of the facts and concerns Marijuana has on Kids.

- The human brain continues to develop into the early 20s. Exposure to addictive substances, including marijuana, may cause changes to the developing brain that make other drugs more appealing. In addition, someone who uses marijuana is more likely to be in contact with people who use and sell other drugs, increasing the risk for being encouraged or tempted to try them.

- Marijuana is a Gateway drug: Statistically, marijuana users don't move on to more dangerous drugs, but most users of "heavy" drugs typically started with marijuana.
- Approximately 10 percent of users may develop what is called a marijuana use disorder—problems with their health, school, friendships, family or other conflicts in their life.
- People who begin using marijuana before the age of 18 are 4–7 times more likely than adults to develop a marijuana use disorder.
- Regular marijuana use increases schizophrenia risk in those with the gene for schizophrenia.
- Available evidence cannot answer whether or not cannabis causes psychosis. But it does reveal an association between the two, with greater risk of psychosis for people who use cannabis frequently.
- Risk of THC Overdose or Emergency room visits by Adolescents is higher due to the fact that they are more likely to use Marijuana in a higher THC Concentration form such as Edibles or Marijuana Extracts.

You and Your Child

Research suggests that one of the most important factors in healthy child development is a strong, open relationship with a parent.

Opening up a discussion about cannabis may be one way to strengthen your relationship with your child. It may encourage open lines of communication about other topics too. Inviting and allowing open, honest conversation about cannabis (or any other subject) makes your child know that what they are thinking, feeling and experiencing matters to you.

We have a Marijuana Talk Kit to help parents prepare for the conversation with their children its put out by the Partnership for Drug Free Kids.

Thank you,

Officer Kelley Tobyne, Officer Jason Skillings, Officer Mike Pietrantonio
Wakefield Police Department