



Harm Reduction Tips: Cannabis

Cannabis use impacts people differently and similar to alcohol, use can become problematic. Use is associated with different risks for different people. For instance, young people are more likely to experience cognitive impairments because their brains are still developing. For those of us using psychiatric medications, cannabis use may interact with our medications or it might make our symptoms or challenges worse. Even if we are not interested in quitting, reducing our use of cannabis might help us avoid additional harm. Review the tips below and place a check next to any of the harm reduction techniques you would like to try.

Harm Reduction Tips

- Buying cannabis on the street can have the risk of being laced with something toxic. Buying from a dispensary rather than a dealer can lower the risk.
- If we experience paranoia or anxiety when using, consider using a strain with higher levels of CBD rather than strains with higher levels of THC.
- Early use of cannabis can result in addiction and cognitive impairments. Consider avoiding use until early adulthood.
- Synthetic cannabinoids are manmade chemicals that can have adverse physical effects. Avoid use of synthetic cannabinoids such as "Spice" or "K2"
- Smoking cannabis can damage our lungs. Most of the THC is absorbed seconds after inhaling. Holding the smoke allows tar and other cancer causing agents to enter our bodies through our lungs. Avoid deep inhalation and holding the inhale to reduce risk.
- Daily use of cannabis is associated with higher health and social risks. Consider occasional use (ie: once a week, social settings, only on weekends).
- If we have a family history of psychosis and substance use disorders, we may be at increased risk. Consider avoiding use altogether.
- Pace yourself, take a smaller hit or use smaller amounts of cannabis at a time
- Avoid using too much cannabis. Know the doses and serving size that will provide you with the best effect at the lowest dose/size.
- Know how cannabis affects you. Stick to the same dispensary, strains, and/or edibles.
- Protect your lungs and choose edibles rather than inhaling cannabis
- Driving while high may increase our risk of being involved in an accident. Refrain from driving for at least 6 hours after using cannabis
- Combining cannabis with other drugs or alcohol can have increased negative effects. Avoid using cannabis with other drugs or alcohol.

My plan for reducing risk: