



# S.T.A.H.L. NEWS

STUDENTS TALKING ABOUT HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Brought to you by ATOD in the Center for Health and Well-Being

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## PA Medical Marijuana: Information for Students

Under the law, Pennsylvania residents who have a serious medical condition as certified by an approved physician are considered medical marijuana patients. There are 23 medical approved "serious medical conditions." See <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/programs/Medical%20Marijuana/Pages/Patients.aspx> for these conditions. Patients register for an ID card and use that card to obtain medical marijuana at Pennsylvania dispensaries.

### What forms of marijuana are allowable under the law?

**PILLS \* OILS \* TOPICAL FORMS \* GEL CREAMS  
OINTMENTS \* NON-WHOLE PLANT FORMS FOR  
ADMINISTRATION THROUGH VAPORIZATION AND  
NEBULIZATION**

Manufactured edibles are not allowed but other products can be mixed into food or drinks to facilitate ingestion by a patient in a facility or residence.

Vaporization is allowed and **smoking is prohibited**

### What restrictions are there for patients?

#### Patients may not:

- Smoke marijuana
- Drive under the influence of marijuana
- Give or sell marijuana to anybody
- Possess marijuana on a school bus or school grounds
- Use marijuana in a public place
- Utilize medical marijuana in the workplace while performing specific dangerous activities
- Purchase food or drinks infused with marijuana

## CAN STUDENTS USE MEDICAL MARIJUANA ON CAMPUS?

- ◆ Although state law has changed, the federal law has not and marijuana remains classified as a Schedule I drug. As a result, regardless of state and local law changes, institutions of higher education are expected to continue to abide by the Drug Free Schools and Campuses Act (Edgar Part 86) by maintaining policies which prohibit marijuana possession, use, or distribution by students, staff, and faculty.

**Meaning, medical marijuana is not permitted on campus under federal law.**

- ◆ If you have a PA medical marijuana card (those from other states are not transferable to PA) and you plan to live on campus, you need to contact the IUP Director of Residential Living and Dining at 724-357-2696.

### Non-medicinal Use of Marijuana: Understanding the Risks:

Our friends to the north, Canada, has been doing research on the effects of marijuana. From that research, recommendation have been outlined. Here are the guidelines as published by the Canadian Nurses Association. <https://www.cna-aicc.ca/~media/cna/page-content/pdf-en/harm-reduction-for-non-medical-cannabis-use.pdf?la=en>

### What are the risks?

The health risks of non-medical cannabis are significantly lower than those of tobacco and alcohol. Yet, it is important to note that non-medical cannabis use is not without risk. Existing evidence demonstrates several potential health effects related to non-medical cannabis use, though experts agree that additional research is needed to identify these and to further develop tools and strategies to prevent adverse outcomes. (Crépault, 2014; TCLR, 2016; NASEM, 201

Current research indicates that much of the health-related harms of non-medical cannabis use fall in the following categories:

- Respiratory effects
- Cannabis use disorder
- Mental health issues
- Cannabis and driving
- Accidental overdose

Persons vulnerable to harms of use despite the need for additional research, there is general agreement from the existing evidence and expert consensus that potential adverse health effects are concentrated among a limited group of high-risk or vulnerable populations:

- Youth
- Pregnant women
- Persons with a personal or family history of psychosis

### How to lower the health risks of cannabis use:

1. Delay use until early adulthood. Since the risk of dependence is higher when use begins at an earlier age, cannabis use disorder and its related health harms may be reduced or avoided if use is delayed until early adulthood.
2. Minimize frequency of use. Because the risk of harm increases with the rate of use, avoid frequent, daily, or near-daily use.
3. Try to stop when use becomes hard to control. Frequent users of non-medical cannabis who experience difficulty controlling their use should attempt to stop, with professional help, as necessary.
4. Minimize respiratory complication, reduce respiratory complications, avoid smoking cannabis with tobacco, refrain from deep inhalation and breath-holding, and consider using a vaporizer rather than smoking.
5. Avoid using amounts that are large or highly concentrated. Be wary of excessive use or high-potency THC cannabis, including synthetic cannabinoid products. Consider adjusting the dose by using only the amount needed to achieve the desired effect.
6. Refrain from using non-medical cannabis with alcohol. Mixing non-medical cannabis with alcohol can increase impairment exponentially and can also cause anxiety, nausea, vomiting, or fainting.
7. Don't drive while high. And don't get in a vehicle if the driver is high. Given that the effect of cannabis consumed by inhalation typically peaks after 30 minutes and gradually subsides after 1 to 3.5 hours (though cognitive impairment may last for up to 6 hours), people should not drive for at least 6 hours after use by inhalation (longer after use by ingestion). Wait longer if high-potency products or larger doses were used, if acute impairment persists or if the cannabis was used with other substances (including alcohol).
8. Share with care. Users should take care to minimize lip contact with joints or implements for smoking or vaporization. Shared items that come in contact with the lips increase the risk of transmitting infections, including meningitis, influenza and other pathogens.
9. Vulnerable groups should abstain from use. An increased risk for cannabis-related problems can occur in high-risk groups, including pregnant women and individuals with a personal or family history of psychosis. These groups should avoid use altogether.
10. Use caution when ingesting cannabis. To avoid accidental overdose with cannabis edibles, "start low and go slow." States where cannabis is legal recommend starting with no more than 10 mg of THC and waiting at least two hours before ingesting more. (University of HARM REDUCTION FOR NON-MEDICAL CANNABIS USE1316 Washington Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute, 2017).

**To avoid accidental overdoses with children or pets, store edibles and other cannabis products safely and out of reach** (Wang et al., 2014).