

## Marijuana Regulation and Teen Use Rates

**Following the enactment of both medical cannabis access laws and adult use marijuana laws, there has been no rise in self-reported marijuana use by adolescents.**

"Rates of marijuana use by teens have been of great interest to researchers over the past decade, given major social and legislative shifts around the drug. ... Fortunately, even as teens' attitudes toward marijuana's harms continue to relax, they are not showing corresponding increases in marijuana use."

[National Institutes on Drug Abuse, December 17, 2018 press release](#)

Thirty states have legalized the medical use of cannabis, and eight of those states have also regulated the adult use of marijuana, since that time.

[Monitoring the Future, Trends in Lifetime Prevalence of Use of Various Drugs, 2016](#)

**Since 2002, perceived availability of marijuana among young people has fallen dramatically nationwide.**

"Between 2002 and 2015, we observed a 27% overall reduction in the relative proportion of adolescents ages 12-17-and a 42 percent reduction among those ages 12-14-reporting that it would be "very easy" to obtain marijuana. This pattern was uniformly observed among youth in all sociodemographic subgroups. ... Despite the legalization of recreational and medical marijuana in some states, our findings suggest that ... perceptions that marijuana would be very easy to obtain are on the decline among American youth."

[Trends in perceived access to marijuana among adolescents in the United States: 2002-2015, Journal of Studies of Alcohol and Drugs, 2017](#)

"From 2002 to 2014, ... the perceived availability decreased by 13 percent among persons aged 12- 17 years and by three percent among persons aged 18-25 years."

[United States Centers for Disease Control, National Estimates of Marijuana Use and Related Indicators - National Survey on Drug Use and Health, United States, 2002-2014, 2016](#)

**Rates of problematic cannabis use by young people has declined 24 percent between 2002 and 2013.**

- [Declining Prevalence of Marijuana Use Disorders Among Adolescents in the United States, 2002 to 2013, Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 2016](#)
- [Recent Trends in the Prevalence of Marijuana Use and Associated Disorders in the United States, JAMA Psychiatry, 2016](#)

**The enactment of medical cannabis laws is not associated with any causal upticks in youth marijuana use**

"This study sought to delineate associations between state-level shifts in decriminalization and medical marijuana laws (MML) and adolescent marijuana use. Using data on 861,082 adolescents (14 to 18+ years; 51% female) drawn from 1999 to 2015 state Youth Risk Behavior Surveys (YRBS), difference-in-differences models assessed how decriminalization and MML (medical marijuana legalization) policy enactment were associated with adolescent marijuana use, controlling for tobacco and alcohol policy shifts, adolescent characteristics, and state and year trends. ... Neither policy was significantly associated with heavy marijuana

use or the frequency of use. ... [R]esults assuage concerns over potential detrimental effects of more liberal marijuana policies on youth use.

[A quasi-experimental evaluation of marijuana policies and youth marijuana use, The American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse, 2019](#)

"The evidence from large nationally representative surveys has not consistently demonstrated that MMLs (medical marijuana laws) have increased adolescent cannabis use. Adolescent use is higher in states that have passed MMLs, but this reflects higher rates of use before the passage of MMLs."

[Has the legalisation of medical and recreational cannabis use in the USA affected the prevalence of cannabis use and cannabis use disorders? Current Addiction Reports](#)

**The passage of adult use cannabis laws is not associated with any causal upticks in youth marijuana use in those jurisdictions that have enacted them**

There has been "no significant change in past 30-day use of marijuana between 2013 (19.7%) and 2017 (19.4%). Also, in 2017, the use rates were not different from the national 30-day use rates reported by the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. In 2017, 19.4% of Colorado high school students reported using marijuana in the past 30-days compared to 19.8% of high school students nationally that reported this behavior."

[Colorado Division of Criminal Justice, Impacts of Marijuana Legalization in Colorado, 2018](#)

"[W]e did not find a significant effect for perceived wrongfulness, perceived ease of access, or perceived parental disapproval. We did not find significant variability in past 30-day use by demographic characteristics or by school and community factors from 2013 to 2015. We did not find a significant effect associated with the introduction of legal sales of recreational marijuana to adults in Colorado on adolescent (illegal) use."

[Adolescent marijuana use, marijuana-related perceptions, and use of other substances before and after initiation of retail marijuana sales in Colorado \(2013-2015\), Prevention Science, 2018](#)