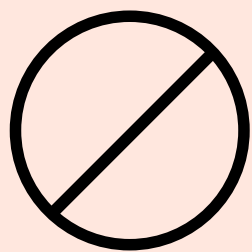




Can't Be Missed: Cannabis & You-th

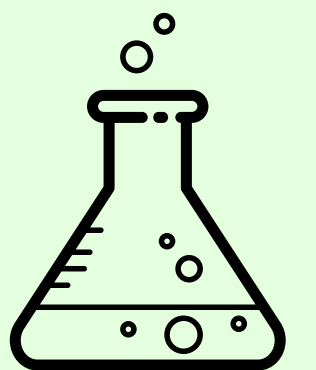
Cannabis: The Facts



- Cannabis use is illegal in the UK unless prescribed for medical reasons
- Recreational cannabis use—including vaping, smoking, or eating edibles—is against the law
- Some young people may still encounter cannabis, so it's important to know the facts

This leaflet summarises what your teenager will learn in You and Me NI Vape Free Lesson 6. It focuses on what cannabis is, its effects on young people, the risks of use (including synthetic cannabinoids like “Spice”), and how to make safe choices.

What Is Cannabis?



- Cannabis contains two main chemicals:
 - THC: Causes the “high” and affects the brain
 - CBD: Used for some medical purposes, does not cause a high
- “Spice” is a dangerous, synthetic (man-made) cannabinoid—much more unpredictable and harmful than natural cannabis

Young Brains Are at Risk



- THC can disrupt brain development in teens and young adults
- Cannabis tricks the brain's reward system, making addiction more likely—especially for young people
- Most people with drug addiction started using before adulthood

How Cannabis Is Used



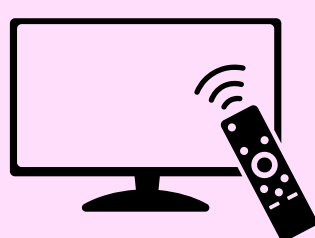
- Cannabis can be inhaled (smoked, vaped, dab pens) or eaten (edibles like brownies or gummies)
- Smoking cannabis (especially in blunts) exposes users to both cannabis and tobacco/nicotine, increasing health risks
- Vaping cannabis is not a safe alternative—young people who vape cannabis are at higher risk for lung problems

Health Effects

- Short-term effects: Red eyes, dry mouth, memory loss, impaired coordination, increased heart rate, “munchies,” paranoia, and altered perception
- Long-term effects: Damage to lungs, heart, and especially the developing brain. Increases risk of addiction
- Synthetic cannabinoids (“Spice”): Can cause severe health problems—psychosis, seizures, paralysis, and even death
- Second-hand smoke from cannabis is also harmful

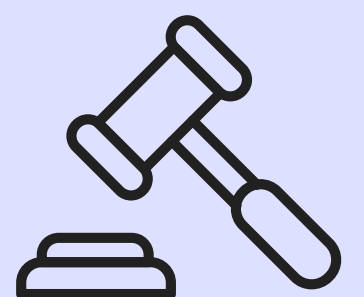


Media, Marketing & Peer Influence



- Cannabis is often portrayed in music, movies, and social media—usually showing only the “fun” side, not the risks
- Peer pressure is a major reason young people try cannabis
- It’s important to know the risks and never take substances from anyone you don’t fully trust

Legal & Social Consequences



- Using cannabis can lead to fines, a criminal record, and affect future opportunities (jobs, university, travel)
- There are also risks to relationships with friends and family



Key Takeaways for Parents

- Cannabis use carries real health, legal, and social risks—especially for young people
- Synthetic cannabinoids like “Spice” are especially dangerous.
- Open conversations at home help teens make safer choices
- Encourage your teen to think critically about what they see in media and among peers
- Remind them: They are in charge of their choices and can always say no