



WHAT YOU NEED TO
KNOW ABOUT USING
MARIJUANA IN ALASKA.



ALASKAN MARIJUANA CONSUMERS SHOULD KNOW THE FACTS AND TAKE RESPONSIBLE USE SERIOUSLY.

WHAT IS CONSIDERED MARIJUANA (CANNABIS) IN ALASKA?

Alaska law defines marijuana as leaves, stems, or flowers (the “buds”) of the marijuana plant; marijuana concentrates, such as oils, hashes, and waxes; and a wide variety of marijuana-infused products, such as edibles, tinctures, and topicals.¹

FACTS FOR ALASKA RESIDENTS AND VISITORS

This overview describes a wide range of issues related to the legal personal-use of marijuana in Alaska. Some marijuana laws (state or local) may have changed since publication of this handbook. Refer to the Alcohol and Marijuana Control Office link on the back cover of this booklet for the most up-to-date information.

ONLY PEOPLE 21 AND OVER may legally possess or use marijuana. It is illegal to give marijuana to anyone under 21 years of age.

KNOW WHERE YOU CAN USE MARIJUANA. Aside from specially designated marijuana retail stores, the law bans all public use of any marijuana (not just smoking). This means it is illegal to use marijuana in schools and universities, amusement venues, businesses, parks, playgrounds, sidewalks, or roads, just to name a few.² Responsible consumption occurs on private property, though some property owners or homeowners associations may have policies that prohibit marijuana use. Check your local laws, and with hotel owners and landlords, prior to consuming marijuana.¹

UNDER FEDERAL LAW, IT IS ILLEGAL TO POSSESS OR USE MARIJUANA. You cannot use it on federal land — including national parks or forests, federal properties or federally-regulated areas. Federal law classifies marijuana as a Schedule I drug — the same category as heroin and LSD. Bringing marijuana onto federal property can result in serious legal consequences.

IT IS ILLEGAL TO DRIVE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ANY AMOUNT OF MARIJUANA. Law enforcement officers base

DUI arrests on observed impairment seen in drivers who have used marijuana, alcohol, or any other substance. Have a plan for your evening that does not involve driving.

WHEN USING MARIJUANA, DO NOT OPERATE ANY MOTORIZED VEHICLE, including cars, snow machines, boats, ATVs, airplanes, etc. You can also get a DUI while operating any aircraft or watercraft that isn't motorized! (AS 28.35.030)

ADULTS AGED 21 AND OLDER MAY POSSESS, GROW, AND GIVE AWAY AS MANY AS 6 MARIJUANA PLANTS AND MAY TRANSFER UP TO ONE OUNCE OF MARIJUANA TO ANOTHER ADULT. Only 3 of the plants can be mature and flowering at any one time. Review marijuana regulations (link on back cover) for detailed information. Federal law prohibits the transport of marijuana through federally regulated highways, airspace, or waterways (this includes the postal service). The Alaska Marine Highway System prohibits the transport of marijuana on Alaska Ferries, and it is illegal to transport marijuana out of state, even to another state where it is legal, such as Washington or Oregon.

YOUR EMPLOYER MAY HAVE A POLICY AGAINST USE. Marijuana use in the workplace may cause safety concerns, especially in industries already prone to workplace injuries. In addition, employers may have a zero-tolerance policy that requires employees to abstain from marijuana use.

KNOW YOUR LOCAL LAWS. Cities and communities are allowed to pass laws that are more restrictive than the state laws regarding commercial marijuana. However, communities may not prohibit individuals from possessing small amounts of marijuana for personal use. Be sure to review your local laws if you plan to start a commercial marijuana business in your community.

EFFECTS VARY BY PRODUCT

MARIJUANA PRODUCTS VARY. Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is the chemical in marijuana that makes you feel high.³ Today's marijuana has much higher concentrations of THC than the marijuana of the past. Newer forms of consumption include vaping (using a device specially designed to heat oils or wax) and smoking hashish oil (e.g., in the form of dabs or shatter); these often have very high concentrations of THC.

EDIBLES ARE FOODS AND DRINKS THAT ARE MADE WITH MARIJUANA OR CANNABIS OILS. Edibles come in many forms including cookies, brownies, jams, condiments, and beverages. For new users, it is best to start with a single serving size (e.g., 5mg) and wait at least 2 hours. Many people feel fine for several hours after consuming edibles, and then suddenly they feel very high. A single serving of a purchased edible in Alaska is limited to 5 mg THC. However, a single product may contain many servings. The score marks on the product indicate the serving amount.

DURATION OF HIGH VARIES BY PRODUCT. Effects typically last 2–5 hours after marijuana is smoked or inhaled. When marijuana is eaten, the effects take longer to start and may last 4–10 hours.⁴

Learn about health considerations for different types of marijuana at www.dhss.alaska.gov.

YOUR BODY'S REACTION

EVERYONE REACTS DIFFERENTLY TO CANNABIS. The amount that is right for a friend may be too much for you. Start with a small amount and allow sufficient time to pass before having more. Effects of marijuana may include:³

- A relaxed or high feeling
- Slower reactions
- Dizziness
- Trouble thinking, learning, and remembering
- Confusion, anxiety, panic, or paranoia
- Fast heart rate – a 20% to 100% increase that can last as long as 3 hours⁵
- Increased blood pressure
- Less interest in normal activities
- Feeling hungry
- Dry mouth
- Red eyes
- Psychosis (rarely) — seeing or hearing things that aren't real

USE MARIJUANA IN MODERATION. The effects of consuming too much include confusion, anxiety, panic, paranoia, increased blood pressure, fast heart rate, nausea and vomiting. If you're concerned you or someone else has consumed too much, you may call the **Poison Control Hotline for free at 1-800-222-1222.**



This image portrays examples of edible cannabis products. It does not represent endorsement of these products by the State of Alaska.

RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION

START LOW, GO SLOW. Effects may take time to set in, especially with edibles. Sometimes it can take hours to reach its full effect and longer to wear off. Start with a small amount and wait before having more.

HAVE A PLAN in place for the time you're high. Don't drive, operate machinery, or participate in activities that require your full attention when you're high. Arrange for someone else to care for your children. Keep track of the time. The effect of cannabis use may take hours to wear off:¹

- Reaction time
- Short-term memory
- Hand-eye coordination
- Concentration
- Perception of time and distance
- The user's ability to judge their own level of impairment

PARENTING, PREGNANCY AND BREASTFEEDING

PROTECT CHILDREN AND FAMILY FROM SECONDHAND

SMOKE. Do not allow anyone to smoke marijuana in your home or car. Although it is not yet known whether the health threats from secondhand marijuana smoke are as great as the dangers from secondhand tobacco smoke, secondhand smoke from marijuana has many of the same chemicals and toxic elements as smoke from tobacco. This includes some carcinogens linked to lung cancer.[1]

SAFELY STORE YOUR MARIJUANA AND EDIBLES OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN AND PETS.

Remind caregivers to also safely store any marijuana or edibles. Marijuana can be toxic for children and pets.

TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT THE USE OF MARIJUANA AND OTHER SUBSTANCES.

Focus on age-appropriate active listening, open-ended questions, objectivity, empathy, and honesty. Though youth may be drawn to marijuana because of curiosity, peer-pressure, a desire to fit in, and stress in their lives, parents can make a difference. One of the main reasons young people choose to avoid drugs is because they know their parents don't approve of it. When talking about marijuana, let youth know that it is illegal for people under 21 to use, can be harmful to developing brains, and it can get in the way of work, school, and family activities.

AVOID USING MARIJUANA WHILE PREGNANT. No matter how you use marijuana during pregnancy, THC enters your blood and passes to your baby. THC may interfere with your baby's brain development because babies' brains are growing rapidly during this time. Some of the potential long-term health effects to babies who are exposed to

marijuana during pregnancy may include the following:

- slower growth
- lower IQ scores
- impaired mental function
- reduced academic ability
- increased risk for lifelong brain and learning problems attention problems

Struggling with morning sickness? There are medicines that are known to be safer than marijuana for nausea during pregnancy. Talk to your health care provider to get a medicine that is safe to take during pregnant.¹

AVOID USING MARIJUANA WHILE BREASTFEEDING.

Breastfeeding has many health benefits for both the mother and baby. However, if you use marijuana while breastfeeding, THC in marijuana gets into breast milk and may affect your baby. THC is stored in body fat. Since your baby's brain and body may store THC for a long time, you should not use marijuana while you are breastfeeding. Talk to your doctor or lactation consultant if you have any questions. For more information about breastfeeding, visit <http://alaskabreastfeeding.org>.



REDUCING OR STOPPING USE

NEED HELP REDUCING OR STOPPING USE?

Talk to your doctor or find treatment providers at <http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/> if you need help reducing or stopping the use of marijuana or any other substance.

RESOURCES

1. Volkov ND, et al. Adverse health effects of marijuana use. *N Engl J Med* 2014; 370:2219-27.
2. Alaska Alcoholic Beverage Control Board Emergency Regulations, February 24, 2015. <https://aws.state.ak.us/OnlinePublicNotices/Notices/Attachment.aspx?id=98820>
3. National Institute on Drug Abuse. Common resources include the Drug Facts: Marijuana, Marijuana Research Report (<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana/letter-director>), and the Drug Facts: Is Marijuana Medicine? (<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana-medicine>).
4. Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment: Retail Marijuana Public Health Advisory Committee's Monitoring Health Concerns Related to Marijuana in Colorado: 2014. Public health statements include information on dose response, cognitive, mental health, respiratory, extra-pulmonary effects, injury and impacts on youth and pregnant/breastfeeding women.
5. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2017. *The Health Effects of Cannabis and Cannabinoids: The Current State of Evidence and Recommendations for Research*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/24625/the-health-effects-of-cannabis-and-cannabinoids-the-current-state>

**Alaska Department of Health and Social Services
Marijuana health information:**

<http://www.marijuana.dhss.alaska.gov>

**Alaska Alcohol & Marijuana Control Office
Marijuana statutes and regulations:**

<https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/amco/marijuanaregulations.aspx>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

1-800-662-HELP (4357)

1-800-487-4889 (TTY)

<http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>



Office of Substance Misuse and Addiction Prevention
Email: osmap@alaska.gov
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