



## **Fact Sheet: Cannabis and Psychosis**

The growing legalization of cannabis across the United States, in addition to the frequent use of cannabis by individuals with psychosis, has led to many questions and concerns about the impacts. The following is a summary of the latest research findings regarding the link between cannabis and psychosis.

### **Risk of Psychosis from Cannabis Use:**

- Studies have shown that THC in cannabis can cause short-term psychosis until the drug is metabolized in the body
- If exposed to cannabis in adolescence, research shows individuals are 2-4x more likely to develop a schizophrenia spectrum disorder, than if you were not exposed
  - o Not everyone who uses cannabis develops psychosis and not everyone with a psychotic disorder was exposed to cannabis.
- Consider avoiding or delaying use of cannabis until after the age of typical expression/onset of the illness (at least 25) (*age of expression can range from ~16-35 years old*)
- Those initially diagnosed with a cannabis-induced psychosis, have greater rates of developing schizophrenia over the long-term
- Frequency and amount, time of exposure, duration of exposure, and potency of cannabis all impact amount of risk for psychosis associated with cannabis use (greater frequency and duration, earlier first use, and higher potency THC = greater risk of psychosis)
- Daily and higher potency cannabis leads to increased risk of psychosis
- Today's cannabis tends to be more potent (higher levels of THC) than several decades ago
- 15% of new cases of psychosis are attributable to cannabis use
- The risk for developing schizophrenia spectrum disorders is greatest with cannabis, although other substances such as amphetamines, hallucinogens, opioids, and sedatives also increase risk.

### **Cannabis use after the onset of psychosis is associated with:**

- More non-adherence to treatment
  - More hospitalizations
  - More ER visits
  - More relapses
  - More legal problems
  - More homelessness
- In regard to the self-medication hypothesis, cannabis use may result in a very temporary reduction in distress associated with psychotic symptoms, however, cannabis use makes symptoms of psychosis worse in the moment and over the long-term

### **CBD and Psychosis:**

- CBD market is largely unregulated so ratios of CBD to THC, as well as general contents may vary greatly from what is advertised
- In a study examining the antipsychotic properties of CBD at Yale, CBD did not improve symptoms of psychosis

