

Cannabis & Schizophrenia



THC and Short-Term Psychosis: Studies indicate that THC, the psychoactive component in cannabis, can cause short-term psychosis until the drug is metabolized.

Adolescence Exposure: Research shows that individuals exposed to cannabis during adolescence are ~ 4x times more likely to develop schizophrenia spectrum disorders compared to those not exposed. Heavier exposure, or the more potent forms of cannabis can increase risk even greater.



Factors Affecting Risk: Frequency, amount, age at first use, duration, and potency of cannabis significantly impact the risk of psychosis. Greater frequency, longer duration, earlier first use, and higher THC potency increase this risk.

Long-Term Risks: Those initially diagnosed with cannabis-induced psychosis have higher rates of developing schizophrenia over time.



Not a Universal Outcome: Not all cannabis users develop psychosis, and not all individuals with psychosis have used cannabis. However, the risk is substantial if the individual has a family history of schizophrenia.

Delayed Use Recommended: To reduce risk, consider avoiding or delaying cannabis use until after age 25, especially if you have a family history of psychosis.

Increased Potency Today: Modern cannabis tends to have higher THC levels than in past decades. Daily and higher potency cannabis leads to increased risk of psychosis.



“Self-Medication” Myth: There is no evidence to support that cannabis use improves any of the core symptoms of schizophrenia, in fact cannabis use in those with an established schizophrenia spectrum disorder leads to worse outcomes.

Substance Comparisons: The risk for developing schizophrenia spectrum disorders is greatest with cannabis use, although other substances such as amphetamines, cocaine, PCP (phencyclidine) also increase risk.



Help is Available: Psychosis is treatable. It is widely accepted that the earlier people get help the better the outcomes. If you or someone you love is experiencing these symptoms and live in Connecticut, call our number today.



203-200-0140

Call for a psychosis screening & rapid referral to care. Calls are confidential.