



Renfrew County and District Health Unit
"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"

For Immediate Release

(Pembroke, Ontario, October 17, 2018)

Cannabis: Legal does not mean safe

Cannabis was legalized on October 17, 2018. In response to the legalization, Renfrew County and District Health Unit is focused on a prevention and harm reduction strategy.

Legal does not mean safe, no drug is without risk. According to legislation, individuals 19 years of age and older can buy, use, possess and grow non-medical cannabis. However, the health unit **advises to avoid cannabis use:**

- **If under the age of 25** as using at a young age increases the risk of developing health, educational and social issues.
- **If there is a personal or family history of mental health problems**, as there is increased risk of cannabis-related psychosis and mental health issues.
- **If planning a pregnancy, pregnant, or breastfeeding** as it may affect the ability to become pregnant and increases risk of harms to baby development.

If you choose to use cannabis, we recommend consulting your healthcare provider and following [Canada's Lower Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines](#). Negative health effects may include irritated respiratory system, impacts on thinking and decision making, impaired motor coordination, reaction time, distorted perceptions, drowsiness and anxiety. Cannabis can affect individuals differently.

Methods of consumption may result in different experiences. For example, when cannabis is inhaled, the effect can be felt almost instantly and may last up to 4 hours. When cannabis is ingested, the effects can be delayed up to 2 hours and may last up to 10 hours.

People should not operate a motorized vehicle while under the influence of cannabis. Many variables impact the level and duration of impairment. Like with alcohol and other substances, impairment can last, unknowingly for prolonged period of time.

The health unit will be enforcing the proposed Smoke Free Ontario Act. It will be illegal to vape or smoke cannabis in areas where smoking tobacco is prohibited. We encourage you to be aware of ongoing changes related to legalization by visiting <https://www.ontario.ca/page/cannabis-legalization>.

For additional information please visit the Renfrew County and District Health Unit website at www.rcdhu.com.

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