

# Pediatric physicians should revisit approaches to marijuana

October 10 2017

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(HealthDay)—In light of the changing legal status of marijuana,

physicians should provide counseling on its effects to adolescents, according to an opinion article published online Oct. 9 in *JAMA Pediatrics*.

Jonathan Reiss, M.D., from the University of California in San Diego, and colleagues discussed the implications of legalizing marijuana, specifically the impact on minors.

The researchers note that supporters of legalization argue that it will lead to increased regulatory capacity, which will allow restriction of marijuana's sale to minors; however, critics raise concerns that legalization will promote a more permissive attitude toward marijuana use among minors, possibly leading to increased rates of use. In the changing [legal environment](#), pediatric physicians must review their approach to screening for marijuana use and discussing the associated health consequences. Physicians should consider screening all adolescents and young adults for marijuana use at preventive care visits; validated tools can be used to determine the severity and patterns of use. Parents of young children should also be screened for marijuana use and to ascertain how [marijuana products](#) are stored in the home. Physicians should provide comprehensive counseling on the impact of marijuana use, focusing on the short- and long-term neurocognitive risks of marijuana exposure on the developing brain.

"Improved screening tactics, thoughtful anticipatory guidance around [marijuana](#) use, and increased community advocacy may enable physicians to protect young people from harm in our changing legal environment," the authors write.

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Citation: Pediatric physicians should revisit approaches to marijuana (2017, October 10)  
retrieved 5 May 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-10-pediatric-physicians-revisit-approaches-marijuana.html>

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