

CDC: Millions of Americans Are Driving While High

Young adult and teen males are the most likely to operate a car after using marijuana or other illicit drugs.

January 2, 2020 By [Alicia Green](#)

Although driving while impaired is illegal in the United States, a new [report](#) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reveals that 12 million adults have driven automobiles under the influence of marijuana. What's more, nearly 2.3 million reported driving while under the influence of other illicit drugs such as cocaine, methamphetamines and opioids.

According to the report, which used data collected in 2018, those most likely to use marijuana before driving were drivers between ages 21 to 25, followed by young people ages 16 to 20. (This is of special concern, says the CDC, because these folks are the youngest drivers and already at greater risk of having car accidents due to lack of experience on the road.)

In addition, male drivers were more likely to report marijuana or illegal drug use than female drivers, and driving under the influence of weed was highest among non-Hispanic multiracial individuals (9.2%).

Among teens and young adults, marijuana use is associated with altered perception, judgment, short-term memory and cognitive abilities.

Interestingly, even with 4.7% of Americans driving under the influence of weed and 0.9% driving under the influence of other drugs, these percentages were lower than for those who reported driving while intoxicated (8.0%, or 20.5 million drivers).

The CDC is calling for a joint effort among public health, transportation safety, law enforcement and federal and state officials to develop and execute strategies to stop people from driving while under the influence of drugs, alcohol or multiple substances.

"Impaired driving is a serious public health concern that needs to be addressed to safeguard the health and safety of all who use the road, including drivers, passengers, pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists," said the CDC.

For related coverage, read "[More Moms-to-Be Admit to Smoking Pot.](#)"

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