

# The Effects of Cannabis Use on Sleep

Many people who use cannabis report doing so to support sleep hygiene. This is particularly notable among college students, with some studies on the population indicating 24% of participants reported using cannabis as a sleep aid. While some research suggests cannabis may help people fall asleep faster and improve sleep quality in the short-term, the long-term effects are more complex. Regular cannabis use in young adults has been linked to poorer sleep quality, reduced REM sleep (important for memory and mood regulation), and increased waking during the night. Research on college students using cannabis to aid sleep was associated with increased overall cannabis use, and being at greater risk of developing Cannabis Use Disorder. Furthermore, students have reported significantly more sleep problems, even after controlling for other factors.



The effects of cannabis on sleep can vary depending on the type of product, the ratio of THC to CBD, and individual factors. THC, the main psychoactive component in cannabis, can initially have a sedative effect, but higher doses may cause alertness or anxiety, particularly in younger individuals. CBD, on the other hand, is associated with relaxation and may promote sleepiness, particularly in higher doses. Furthermore, disrupted sleep due to cannabis use may contribute to impaired memory function.

## Risks of Cannabis Use to Support Sleep

- Cannabis may help some individuals, including young adults, fall asleep faster and improve sleep quality initially.
- Regular cannabis use, especially in those aged 18-25, is linked to poorer sleep quality, reduced REM sleep, and increased awakenings.
- The effects of cannabis on sleep vary significantly from person to person, including young adults.
- Using cannabis regularly as a sleep aid may lead to dependence and withdrawal symptoms, including insomnia.
- Disrupted sleep due to cannabis use may contribute to impaired memory function in young adults.
- College students who use cannabis have a higher risk of experiencing insomnia, with daily users being at the greatest risk.
- Using cannabis for sleep in college students may negatively impact sleep efficiency in the long run.

## ♦ Articles

- COLLEGE STUDENTS' USING MARIJUANA TO SLEEP RELATES TO FREQUENCY, PROBLEMATIC USE, AND SLEEP PROBLEMS



- STUDY OF THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN CANNABIS USE AND SLEEP DISTURBANCES IN A LARGE SAMPLE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS



- CANNABIS USE AND SLEEP: EXPECTATIONS, OUTCOMES, AND THE ROLE OF AGE



## ♦ Support Sleep Sans Cannabis Use

- Establish a consistent sleep schedule.
- Make sleep a daily priority.
- Optimize sleep environment.
- Limit blue light exposure.
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol before bed.
- Engage in regular physical activity.
- Manage stress effectively.
- Establish a relaxing bedtime routine.
- Ensure adequate amount of sleep (7-9 hours).
- Seek support for sleep issues.

*UNIVERSITY POLICY PROHIBITS USE, SALE, OR DISTRIBUTION OF CANNABIS ON CAMPUS.*



### RESOURCES AT USM

If you or someone you know is struggling with their mental health and/or substance use, here are some on-campus resources:

**Screen U** - An anonymous, confidential, and free screening to help you understand your level of risk – available on USM's Counseling Services website.

**USM Counseling Services** - Schedule an appointment with a counselor or sign up for a **BASICS** session (Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students).

**The ROCC** (Recovery-Oriented Campus Center) - A collegiate recovery program which assists and inspires student success via academic pursuits and personal journey.

FOR COMMENTS ON THIS NEWSLETTER OR SUGGESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT:

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