

# Legalizing marijuana will harm health of youth in Canada

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The federal government's bill C-45 to legalize marijuana in Canada will jeopardize the health of young people and Parliament should vote against it, argues the interim editor-in-chief of *CMAJ* (*Canadian Medical*

*Association Journal*) in an editorial.

"Simply put, cannabis should not be used by [young people](#)," says Dr. Diane Kelsall, Editor-in-Chief (Interim), *CMAJ*. "It is toxic to neurons, and regular use of marijuana can actually change their developing brains."

The Canadian Paediatric Society and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health have publicly stated that marijuana is not harmless and can have [negative effects](#) on the brain, especially young brains.

Based on evidence that suggests the human brain continues to mature until age 25, the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) recommends a minimum age of 21 to purchase and use marijuana. These groups have all called for restrictions on potency and quantities to minimize risk of adverse effects.

"Most of us know a young person whose life was derailed because of marijuana use," writes Dr. Kelsall. "Bill C-45 is unlikely to prevent such tragedies from occurring - and, conversely, may make them more frequent."

Many fear that legalization of marijuana will substantially increase impaired driving from using [marijuana](#) alone, as well as with alcohol.

"The government appears to be hastening to deliver on a campaign promise without being careful enough about the health impacts of policy. It's not good enough to say that provinces and territories can set more stringent rules if they wish. If Parliament truly cares about the public health and safety of Canadians, especially our youth, this bill will not pass."

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