

HEALTH + DEVELOPMENT/MENTAL HEALTH

Is the ‘Weed Mom’ the New Wine Mom?

Why some moms are choosing cannabis over cabernet

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The wine mom meme tacitly acknowledges the challenges of parenting. Who wouldn't want to relax over a glass of wine after the kind of crazy day that moms call "Tuesday"? But for a lot of different reasons, some moms are turning to marijuana instead of alcohol when they get a chance for some "me time."

The World Health Organization claims there's no level of alcohol consumption that is safe for our health (<https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/04-01-2023-no-level-of-alcohol-consumption-is-safe-for-our-health>). As they age, many women notice that the

amount of alcohol that used to generate a pleasant buzz now leads to heartburn, insomnia or even a hangover. Cannabis has none of these drawbacks, so why isn't everyone replacing alcohol with marijuana?

For a lot of people, the answer is social stigma. Andrea Meharg of the [Cannabis Coaching Institute](https://www.cannabiscoachinginstitute.com/) (<https://www.cannabiscoachinginstitute.com/>) in Ontario, Canada, understands completely.

"When I was in my 30s, if you had told me there was a mom who was 'treating her depression' with cannabis, I would have had all of the bad thoughts about her and what kind of kids she was raising," says Meharg. Back then, when her kids, now ages 13 and 11, were little, she found herself in the grip of suicidal depression. Cannabis helped when prescription medication didn't.

"I don't want other people to have to be that dark before they can think of cannabis as a medicine," she says. Today, she is a certified cannabis coach who helps people understand how to use cannabis for better health, and she has developed [an online class](https://www.revealcannabis.com/kids) (<https://www.revealcannabis.com/kids>) that teaches parents how to talk to their kids about cannabis. "I see a huge shift in acceptance and curiosity in people in this age group."

Meharg says there is no statistical data on usage patterns, but in her practice as a cannabis coach and educator, she has seen many people who have used cannabis to overcome alcohol and opiate addiction and mental illnesses.

"I also see a lot of moms who are tired of waking up on a Tuesday morning feeling hungover because Monday was so hard and they flopped into bed after two glasses of wine," says Meharg.

Creative cannabis

Old stereotypes still have a lot of purchase in popular culture, though, and nobody wants to be "the stoner mom."

"Companies in legalized markets realize that not everyone wants to be on the moon," says Meharg. "There are products that can do that. But THC isn't a scary on/off switch. It's much more of a continuum. There's lots of ways to give you a relaxed, fun Friday night without feeling out of control."

Legalization has led to new aesthetics around cannabis culture, too. "Most women are not willing or eager to go spark up a joint," says Meharg. While a colorful vape pen may not have quite the cachet of a Riedel wine glass, moms are getting creative with edibles recipes that go way beyond the old-fashioned brownie. [Cannabis-infused beverages](https://www.amazon.com/Cannabis-Cocktails-Mocktails-Tonics-Buzz-) (<https://www.amazon.com/Cannabis-Cocktails-Mocktails-Tonics-Buzz->

[Worthy/dp/1592337341?ie=UTF8&tag=parentmap-20](https://www.worthy.com/dp/1592337341?ie=UTF8&tag=parentmap-20)) even give you a chance to use that lovely stemware. Legal pot shops sell cute, low-dose gummies, the effects of which are entirely different from what people used to buy on the streets.

Low and slow

When Meharg was first exploring the world of cannabis, there wasn't much information or guidance available. Because marijuana is still listed as a federal Schedule 1 drug in the United States, there is still [limited scientific research](https://stories.avvo.com/rights/marijuana/are-federal-marijuana-laws-keeping-us-sick.html) (<https://stories.avvo.com/rights/marijuana/are-federal-marijuana-laws-keeping-us-sick.html>) on its effects.

"It really is a process for each individual person to find out what makes them feel good," Meharg explains. In the cannabis industry, the mantra for that trial and error is "Start low and go slow." That means starting with one inhalation or an edible with 1–2 mg of THC. Do not take a second dose, even if the first appears to have no effect, unless you want to risk an emergency room visit. In high doses, THC can cause paranoia, nausea and a racing heart rate.

"It takes a while to understand this dangerous drug that will fry your brain and ruin your life – things it does have the potential to do if you blast off to the moon on purpose every day," says Meharg.

She also warns that not all cannabis is cannabis. [Synthetic cannabinoids](https://www.king5.com/article/news/politics/state-politics/washington-lawmakers-urge-halt-hemp-thc/281-a96f6aa0-c4cd-48f8-b3a6-e5a8938d42f0) (<https://www.king5.com/article/news/politics/state-politics/washington-lawmakers-urge-halt-hemp-thc/281-a96f6aa0-c4cd-48f8-b3a6-e5a8938d42f0>) are chemically converted from non-intoxicating CBD into concentrated variants of THC. These cheap synthetics are responsible for a disproportionate [percentage of cannabinoid poisoning calls](https://news.wsu.edu/press-release/2022/08/09/legalized-cannabis-linked-to-fewer-synthetic-cannabinoid-poisonings/) (<https://news.wsu.edu/press-release/2022/08/09/legalized-cannabis-linked-to-fewer-synthetic-cannabinoid-poisonings/>). While synthetics are [banned in Washington](https://cbdoracle.com/news/policy/delta-8-thc-legal-washington/) (<https://cbdoracle.com/news/policy/delta-8-thc-legal-washington/>), they are available online. Washington residents should only purchase natural THC and CBD products from licensed marijuana stores (bring cash).

Mindful marijuana

There is no research on how marijuana impacts parenting skills, but [some parents report](https://cannigma.com/cannabis-news/cannabis-makes-me-a-better-parent/) (<https://cannigma.com/cannabis-news/cannabis-makes-me-a-better-parent/>) that cannabis helps them maintain patience and be more present with their kids. Mindfulness is the opposite of getting stoned, but Meharg says it's critical to developing a healthy relationship with a potentially harmful substance.

“If you’re out to get as high as humanly possible, it’s the same as if you’re out to get as drunk as humanly possible,” says Meharg. “Parents can’t be intoxicated to the point where they can’t care for their children.” Parents need to be mindful about when, where and how they consume cannabis. They also need to be thoughtful about the attitudes and habits they model for their kids.

“Of course, as parents we have to be really careful so that our kids don’t have unintended access to it,” says Meharg. But that doesn’t mean being secretive.

“We need to talk to our kids about important things. I want my kids to know about this plant, its potential benefits and drawbacks for using high levels of THC.” If you have teenagers, it’s definitely time to talk to them about cannabis. The legal age is 21, for good reason (<https://www.parentmap.com/article/marijuana-use-and-developing-teen-brain>), but just as with alcohol, teenagers will have opportunities to use it. It’s even better to talk early and often with your child about cannabis, using age-appropriate explanations. If your kids know it’s not a taboo subject, you can let them take the lead.

“Making sure that you have an open line of communication with your kids around this and all of the other big subjects is so important. My perspective as a teacher is to talk to kids until they stop asking questions,” says Meharg.

Medical marijuana

Available research supports the effectiveness of cannabis to treat ailments such as migraines

(<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9197380/#:~:text=Medical%20cannab> (<https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2017-33326-005>) and insomnia

(<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9067069/#:~:text=Overall%2C%20can>

“Parenting brings on anxiety (<https://www.projectcbd.org/cannabis-cbd-anxiety>) for so many people, and we have clinical evidence that supports use of this plant for stress reduction, [and to alleviate symptoms of] anxiety and depression,” says Meharg. “I treat it like medicine. I rely on this to be the best mom I can be. But if you’re just looking for a great time on a Friday night, you can have small amounts of cannabis and feel really good and happy and giggly. And then the next morning, wake up feeling totally fine.”

Finding reliable, unbiased information about cannabis can still be a challenge. Meharg recommends the following resources for people who want to learn more.

[Project CBD \(https://www.projectcbd.org/\)](https://www.projectcbd.org/): A neutral source of information used within the industry.

[CannaKeys \(https://cannakeys.com/\)](https://cannakeys.com/): Provides reports on cannabis research and access to published scientific articles.

[The Cannigma \(https://cannigma.com/\)](https://cannigma.com/): An online magazine for a general audience written by cannabis professionals.

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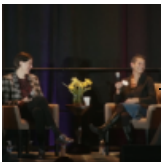
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