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Weed and teeth.



Smoking weed? Got Teeth?



By Paul Ansell - Dentist

In the 1999 hip-hop classic “The Next Episode” by Dr. Dre featuring Snoop Dogg, the track explores questionable lifestyle choices centred around drinking, guns, and casual sexual encounters. Notably, the standout line “Smoke weed everyday!” is delivered with great enthusiasm.

After a little digging, I discovered that Dr. Dre does not have the formal medical qualifications to give such advice, and Snoop’s first job included selling candy door-to-door. Anecdotal evidence, I presume? This left me wondering if this pair are the best positioned to give public health advice, particularly considering their platform and influence. While this track is decades old, many of the same themes persist in hip-hop lyrics, and smoking weed is promoted as a daily ritual. ASAP Rocky hints at restraint in his 2018 hit “Praise the Lord”:

“Sometimes I even stop the smokin’ when it’s time to focus.”

So, won’t somebody please think of the teeth? Here we are, coming in hot with another buzz-kill!

It is probably naive to think that long-term dental care is at the forefront of the mind for regular cannabis users. Yet while skinning up the next fatty, or when completely baked, an altered perception and concern for dental care might come creeping in.

In our much-loved role as the fun police here at Amelo, we'll butt out the bud and outline five negative oral health side effects of cannabis use. Just to exacerbate the paranoia...

A dry, pasty mouth is a common effect of cannabis use. As we know well here at Amelo, a dry mouth with reduced saliva quality and quantity is particularly bad. This reduces the ability for your teeth to be protected from decay and erosion. In short, regular users get more tooth decay.

Increased appetite – getting high and craving junk food go hand in hand. Lots of junk food and a dry mouth lead to a much greater chance of getting tooth decay.

Stained and discoloured teeth and reduced motivation for self-care – it's not often the phrase "go-getting stoner" is thrown around. It appears that good oral hygiene habits and motivation towards health care, in general, are lacking in regular cannabis users. Less brushing, along with the above oral environment and diet factors, combine to increase the risk of dental disease.

Impacts of the smoke on your gums and soft tissues – much like tobacco smoking, there is a reduction in the effectiveness of the immune system. This, combined with general irritation, leads to increased rates of candida (thrush) and gum disease. This progresses to periodontal disease, where the gum and jawbone do not support the teeth, and deep pockets beside teeth filled with harmful bacteria can thrive. The end result is poor general health and a higher chance of tooth loss. Smoky Joe becomes Gummy Joe.

Oral cancer – much like tobacco smoking, there is a much higher incidence of oral cancer, which has a high morbidity and mortality rate.

For many, addiction, mental and physical health issues, and other factors have led to dependence on cannabis and other substances. Whilst we like to share our messages about drug use and dental health in an engaging way, we also realise the importance of people seeking proper assistance.

Your dental professional can help in their particular field, and reaching out to services such as [ADIS](<https://adis.health.qld.gov.au/>) or similar offerings in your area is encouraged.

Sorry, Snoop and Dre, "Don't smoke weed everyday" or much at all really is the new club banger.

Next up – check out the risks of "Gin and Juice" on tooth decay and acidic erosion.

Take away points:

- Don't take advice from (rap) songs too literally.
- Smoking cannabis has several oral health side effects, including dry mouth, increased appetite, teeth staining and discolouration, oral thrush, gum disease, and oral cancers.
- Aside from poorly impacting oral health, smoking cannabis has many other negative health consequences.

References:

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