

Know the Signs...

**If someone is high on marijuana,
he or she might:**

Act dizzy and have trouble walking.

Seem silly and giggly for no reason,
with bursts of laughter.

Talk rapid and loud.

Have very red, bloodshot eyes: pupils
unlikely to be dilated.

Have a hard time remembering things
that just happened.
(Forgetfulness in conversation)

Have an odor similar to burnt rope or
clothing on breath.

Have a distorted sense of time passage
and overestimate time intervals.

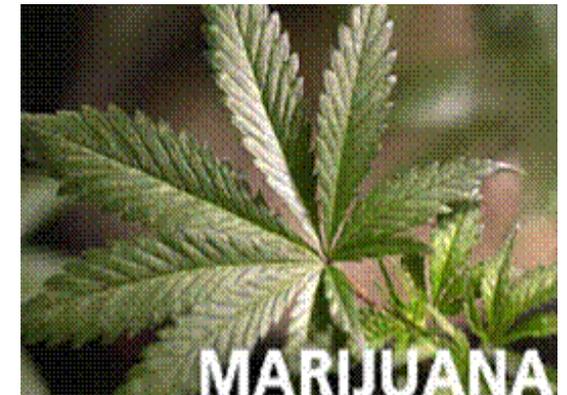


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Marijuana

Facts for Parents and Teens



What is MARIJUANA

Marijuana is a green, brown, or gray mixture of dried, shredded leaves, stems, seeds and flowers of the hemp plant. You may hear marijuana called by street names such as: pot, herb, weed, grass, “4:20”, boom, Mary Jane, gangster or chronic.

Hashish (“hash” for short) and hash oil are stronger forms of marijuana.

All forms of marijuana are mind-altering and change how the brain works. They all contain THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol), the main active chemical in marijuana. They also contain more than 400 other chemicals. Marijuana’s effects on the user depend on its strength or potency, which is related to the amount of THC it contains. The THC content of marijuana has been increasing since the 1970’s.

Marijuana is usually smoked as a cigarette (called a joint or a nail) or in a pipe or a bong. Recently, it has appeared in cigar wrappers called blunts, when it is often combined with another drug, such as crack cocaine.

THC in marijuana is rapidly absorbed by fatty tissues in various organs. Generally, traces (metabolites) of THC can be detected by standard urine testing methods several days after a smoking session. However, in chronic, heavy users, traces can sometimes be detected for weeks after they have stopped using marijuana.

Short-term Effects

Problems with memory and learning.

Distorted perception (sights, sounds, time, touch).

Trouble with thinking and problem solving.

Loss of motor coordination.

Increased heart rate.

Some users may feel relaxed or high.

Some users feel thirsty or very hungry, an effect called “the Munchies”.

Some users undergo bad effects and suffer sudden feelings of anxiety and have paranoid thoughts. This is more likely to happen when a very potent variety of marijuana is used.

When early effects fade, the user can become very sleepy.

Risks

Cancer

Marijuana contains some of the same, and sometimes even more, of the cancer-causing chemicals found in tobacco smoke. Studies show that someone who smokes five joints per day may be taking in as many cancer-causing chemicals as someone who smokes a full pack of cigarettes every day.

Lungs and Airways

People who smoke marijuana often develop the same kinds of breathing problems that cigarette smokers have: coughing and wheezing. They tend to have more chest cold than non-users. They are also at greater risk of getting lung infections like pneumonia.

Immune System

THC can damage the cells and tissues in the body that help protect against disease and when the immune cells are weakened you are more likely to get sick.

Additional Risks

Studies show that when people smoke marijuana for years, it takes a toll on mental functions. Heavy or daily use of marijuana affects the parts of the brain that control memory, attention and learning.

A working short-term memory is needed to learn new things and perform multi-tasks.

Smoking marijuana causes changes in the brain that are similar to those caused by cocaine, heroin, and alcohol.

Long-term marijuana use can lead to addiction.

Users will not be able to control their urges to seek out and use marijuana, even though it negatively affects their family relationships, school performance and recreational activities. Marijuana use by teenagers who have prior antisocial problems can quickly lead to addiction. Frequent and heavy marijuana use develops “tolerance” to its effects. Users need larger and larger amounts of marijuana to get the same desired effects as they used to get from smaller amounts.



Marijuana : Facts for Teens

- About one in every four high school seniors is a current marijuana user.
- Marijuana and driving do not mix. Users have delayed reactions to sights and sounds. Driver’s need to be aware of how to stay safe.
- Marijuana can mess up your performance in school, sports and other parts of your life.
- When you are high, you are more likely to make mistakes that could embarrass or hurt you.
- Marijuana affects judgment and decision making, its use can lead to risky sexual behavior, resulting in pregnancy or exposure to sexually transmitted diseases.