



Spotlight on
Marijuana

What is Marijuana?

- Marijuana comes from the cannabis sativa plant, also known as the hemp plant. It is grown all over the world, especially in tropical climates.
- Marijuana is a mixture of the plant's crushed leaves and flowers. It looks like dried parsley.



How can it be used?

Marijuana can be smoked as a cigarette (joint), in a pipe (bowl) or in a water pipe (bong).

Marijuana can also be consumed with food. When eaten, the effects are not as predictable because the body absorbs THC more slowly.



Under federal law, possession and sale of marijuana is illegal in the United States, although several states have made exceptions for medical marijuana used to control pain.

What's in Marijuana?

Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is the mind-altering ingredient in marijuana. THC is responsible for the “high” that users feel. The typical amount of THC in marijuana ranges from 5% to 8%-much more potent than it was a few decades ago. More THC means more side effects.

Marijuana smoke contains more than 400 chemicals. Some are the same chemicals found in tobacco, many of which can cause cancer. And because marijuana smokers tend to inhale deeply and hold their breath longer than cigarette smokers, their lungs are exposed to even more smoke.

Smoking one marijuana joint
Deposits 4x as much tar into the
Lungs as smoking 1 tobacco
cigarette.



Types of Marijuana

A Joint: is a rolled-up marijuana cigarette.

A Roach: is the burned-down end of a marijuana cigarette.

A Blunt: is a split or hollowed-out cigar filled with marijuana.

Hashish: is a concentrated extract of the cannabis plant. It is usually sold as a dark gummy ball, and contains higher levels of THC than ordinary marijuana.

Hash Oil: is thick, concentrated oil that has higher levels of THC than hashish.

Special Bulletin: Synthetic Marijuana

- Synthetic marijuana is a blend of herbs and plant material that is sprayed with synthetic cannabinoids-man made chemicals that bind to the same receptors in the brain as THC. Known by the brand names K2 and Spice, these drugs were legally sold as herbal incense or potpourri.
- Synthetic marijuana produces effects similar to or even more potent than marijuana. Using the drug can cause difficulty breathing, racing heartbeat, vomiting, tremors, extreme anxiety, panic attacks, and convulsions. In the first 8 months of 2011, U.S. poison control centers received 4,421 calls relating to synthetic marijuana.
- In March, 2011, five specific synthetic cannabinoids were temporarily classified as Schedule 1 drugs by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Still, officials warn that manufacturers of synthetic marijuana may simply switch to using other, still-legal cannabinoids so that they can continue selling their products. Just because it's legal-for now-doesn't mean it's safe.

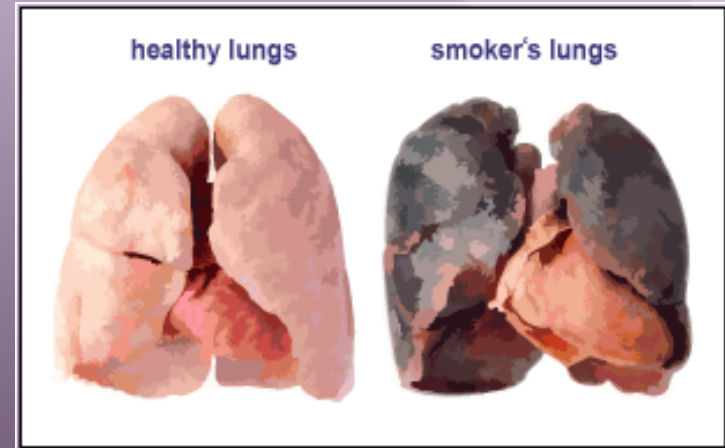
Marijuana and the Body

The Lungs

Marijuana smoke contains many more carcinogens (cancer-causing agents) than tobacco smoke. Smoking marijuana irritates the air passages and kills cilia in the lungs. Regular users often develop a chronic cough that can progress into lung diseases such as bronchitis, emphysema, and lung cancer.

The Mouth

Regular use of marijuana may lead to cancer of the mouth, the larynx, and the upper jaw.



The Cardiovascular System

Marijuana raises the user's heart rate and blood pressure, increasing the risk of premature stroke and heart attack.

Marijuana and the Body

The Stomach

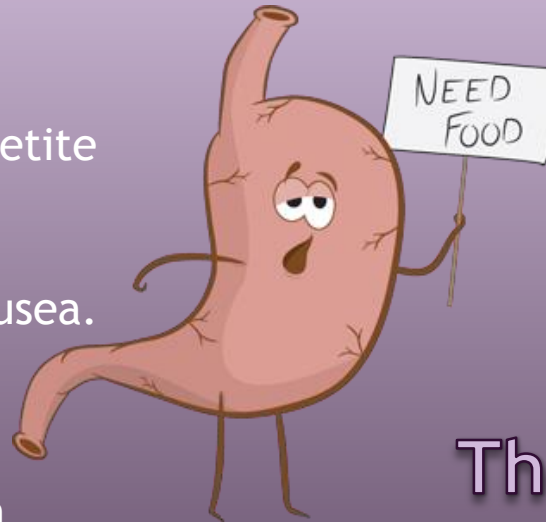
Marijuana increases appetite but slows the digestive process. When eaten, marijuana can cause nausea.

Muscles

Marijuana acts as a muscle relaxant and can interfere with a user's normal reflexes even after the high has ended.

Body Tissue

THC is stored in fatty areas of the body and can be detected in the body for up to 28 days after use.



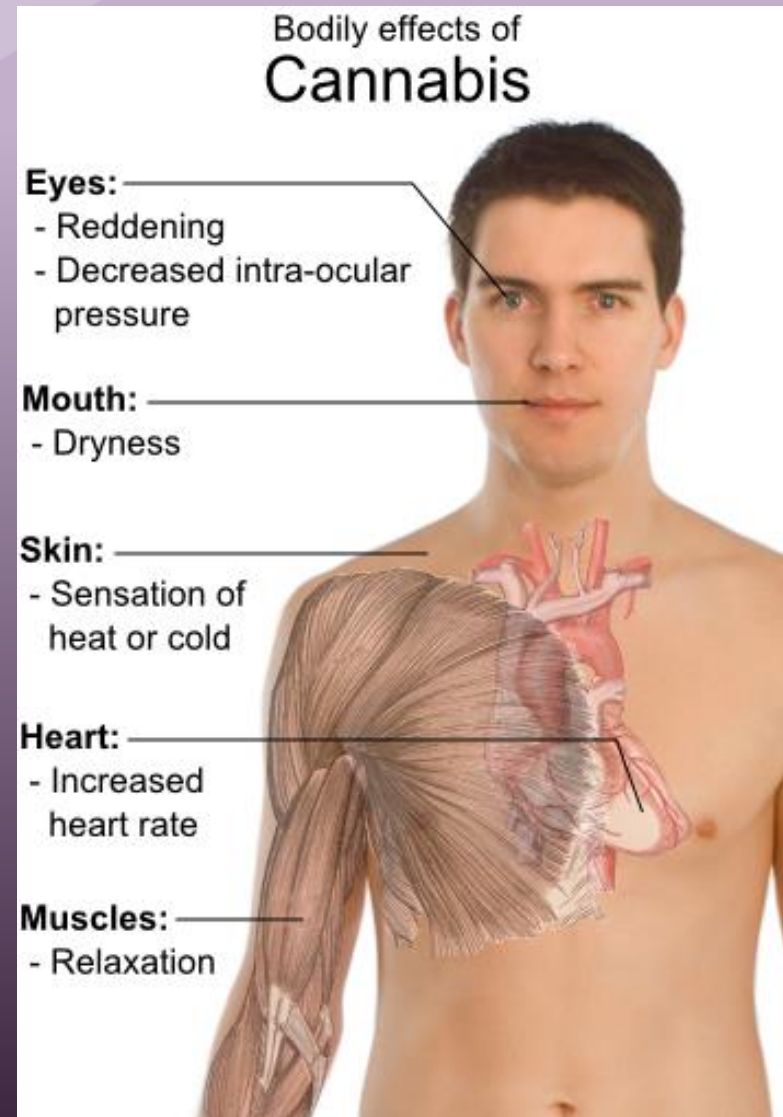
The Reproductive System

In females, marijuana use can disrupt the menstrual cycle and lead to fertility problems. In males, marijuana lowers the sperm count and may cause irregular sperm cells to form.

SHORT-TERM EFFECTS

People who use marijuana may display the following symptoms:

- Delusions
- Increased appetite (“Munchies”)
- Increased heart rate
- Bloodshot eyes
- Dry mouth and throat
- Loss of short-term memory
- Dizziness
- Altered sense of time
- Impaired judgment
- Inability to concentrate on tasks
- Loss of coordination
- Loss of depth perception



LONG-TERM EFFECTS

- Risk of brain damage
- Mental depression
- Reduced immunity to infections
- Impaired memory and ability to learn
- Hallucinations and paranoia
- Chronic lung diseases such as bronchitis and emphysema
- Heart disease
- Increased risk of lung cancer
- Irregular ovulation in females
- Decreased sperm count in males



Marijuana and the Brain

Marijuana stimulates brain cells to release a neurotransmitter called dopamine, which results in a sense of euphoria. Most users report feeling relaxed and some also report heightened sensory perception, altered perception of time and increase appetite. Marijuana can also cause anxiety, paranoia, and distortion of reality.



Recent research has discovered that THC can cause serious impairments to the teen brain. Marijuana significantly affects a part of the brain called the hippocampus-crucial to forming new memories-which impairs a person's ability to learn new information. This effect can last for days or even weeks after the initial high has worn off. The national Institute on Drug Abuse warns, "Someone who smokes marijuana every day may be functioning at a suboptimal intellectual level all of the time."

Marijuana and the Brain

THC also affects the cerebellum, which helps control balance and coordination. This impairs athletic performance and driving ability. In fact, driving after using marijuana increases your risk of being involved in an accident-and it's illegal in all 50 states.

Marijuana is also linked to psychosis and schizophrenia in people who are genetically predisposed to these mental illnesses. Using marijuana as a teenager increases the risk of developing psychosis even more for these individuals.



Think you
can smoke
pot and
play your
best?

Marijuana and Sports

THC actually binds to receptors in your brain that control balance, posture, coordination, and reaction time—all things that are important to athletic performance. In addition, marijuana smokers can have many of the same respiratory problems as tobacco smokers such as a daily cough and phlegm production.



Marijuana and the Law

Marijuana is legally classified as Schedule 1 controlled substances in the U.S. This means that marijuana is considered to have a high potential for abuse and has no commonly accepted medical use. Though some states have legalized marijuana for some medical purposes, these laws remain controversial.



Legal penalties vary from state to state. Depending upon where you live, you could face fines, jail time and/or loss of your driver's license for the use or possession of even small amounts of marijuana.

Using marijuana can also seriously affect your future. Testing positive on a drug screening test can cost you your job. A marijuana conviction can also hurt your chances of getting into college, getting financial aid and getting hired in the future.

CANNABIS

SLANG TERMS

Wacky tobacky

buds

smoke

pot

joint

reefer

gold

ganja

bhong

cheeba

sinsemilla

spliff

hay

jive

dope

herb

bone

dub

tea

weed

leaf

mary jane

doja

jay or J

budda

doobie

toke

thai stick

jamaican

blunt

grass

roach

Is Marijuana Addictive?



Each year, more than 7.1 million people in the U.S. abuse marijuana. More than 1 million people receive treatment for marijuana dependence each year—more than for any other illicit drug. Someone who is dependent on marijuana has difficulty controlling his or her marijuana use. He or she can't stop using, even though it has negative effects on his or her family, work, school, and social life.

Approximately 1 in 6 people who begin smoking pot as a teenager will become dependent on the drug.

Users who are dependent on marijuana may also experience withdrawal symptoms when they stop using, such as irritability, trouble sleeping, decreased appetite, craving, and anxiety.

Getting Help

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Treatment
Facility Locator

1-800-662-HELP
www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov

Marijuana Anonymous
1-800-766-6779
www.marijuana-anonymous.org

National Institute on Drug Abuse: The Facts about
Marijuana
www.marijuana-info.org