

MARIJUANA AND SUCCESS DON'T MIX

Getting an education is important. Finding a good job and having a place of your own is important. School prepares young people for their future success. If marijuana gets in the way, however, that future may not be so bright. One study found that people who smoke marijuana weekly earn \$7500 less per year and daily smokers earned about \$12,000 less than non-smokers. That means that over a lifetime daily marijuana smokers will earn over \$500,000 less than non-smokers. The decision to use marijuana is an expensive one.

It is especially easy to become addicted to marijuana as a teenager

SO WHAT IS MARIJUANA?

Marijuana is a recreational drug made from the dried, ground up leaves of the cannabis plant. Although it has over 100 different chemicals, marijuana's main psychoactive chemical is tetrahydrocannabinol, also known as THC. Marijuana is usually smoked, consumed in food, extracted, or vaporized. Users typically describe the feeling they get from marijuana as a high.



LEGALITY OF MARIJUANA

Marijuana was outlawed in the U.S. in the early twentieth century, but in recent years some states have made it legal for both medical and recreational use. Nevertheless, it is still illegal for the majority of American citizens to own or consume it. As the conversation about marijuana and its legal status becomes more widespread, it's important to stay informed. Using marijuana could get you in a lot of trouble in your state.

WHAT ABOUT ADDICTION?

Marijuana is addictive. Despite what many people think, it is actually quite easy to form a marijuana addiction, as research shows that 30% of users develop one. It is especially easy to become addicted to marijuana as a teenager, as weed alters the brain chemistry of already changing brains and creates dependency.

MARIJUANA & THE DEVELOPING BRAIN

A young person's brain isn't fully developed until their mid-20s. During adolescence, the young brain builds structures and forms connections that make it more efficient and strengthens emotional abilities such as self control. Throw marijuana into the mix, and scientists worry that this brain building process may be seriously altered. Some brain-imaging studies comparing young people who smoke pot versus others who don't, have shown differences in the brain structure and connections between the hemispheres. Laboratory rats who were given THC at puberty show signs of significant and lasting cognitive problems. Don't be a lab rat!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

DEA Prevention

www.getsmartaboutdrugs.gov

Centers for Disease Control

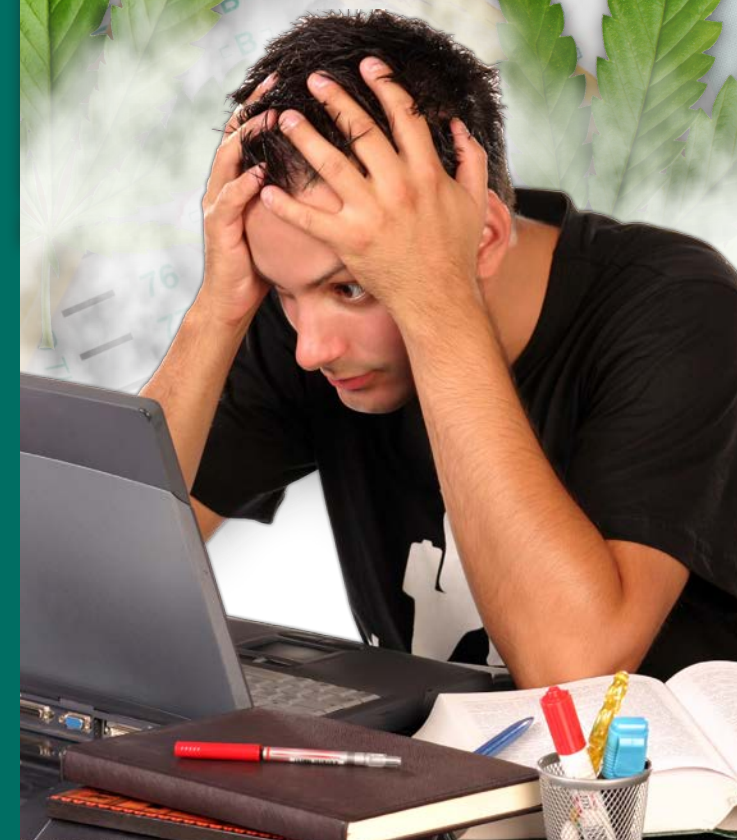
www.cdc.gov/marijuana

in the know

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MARIJUANA & YOUR GRADES

Don't Let Your Future
Take a Hit





SHORT-TERM EFFECTS

When marijuana is smoked or vaporized, its effects are usually felt within minutes. When it is eaten, however, it can take anywhere from thirty minutes to two hours to cause a reaction. The high from cannabis can last from one to six hours, depending on the dose and the way it was taken. Some may feel a change in perception, mood, and appetite. Marijuana's high also comes with many negative side effects, including:

- Slowed motor skills
- Impaired short-term memory
- Dry eyes
- Cough
- Loss of reasoning skills
- Paranoia
- Anxiety

In states where marijuana has been legalized, car accidents connected to its use have increased sharply, a direct result of these harmful short-term symptoms.

LONG-TERM EFFECTS

At the moment, a great deal about the long-term effects of marijuana use is still unknown as it is difficult to legally obtain marijuana for research. It's hard to fully understand the lasting effects that this drug has on the body, as it's often used in combination with other harmful substances like tobacco, alcohol, and narcotics. Nevertheless, there is evidence to suggest that heavy use over long periods of time may cause lung cancer, decreased brain function, and even heart disease. As with cigarettes, smoking marijuana means inhaling tar, which is now widely known to cause cancer, and, like most recreational drugs, marijuana can also become an addiction.

MARIJUANA & ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Marijuana use and dependence have been linked to poor academic performance in teenagers and young adults. High school students that use marijuana are more likely to fail classes and drop out of school and are far less likely to go to college. It's not surprising. Pot negatively affects many of the skills necessary for academic success, such as memory, focus, and comprehension. It's not just while you're high, as the effects on the brain can linger days, weeks, or even months.

Low motivation to study and attend class is common with students who regularly use marijuana. Statistics show that if you're drinking alcohol all night or are a frequent smoker, you're less likely to show

up to your 8 a.m. class or go to your study group the next day. Heavy drinkers and smokers in one study had an average GPA of 2.66, compared with 3.1 for mostly sober students. That difference could cause you to lose a scholarship!

Marijuana also affects your social life. Anxiety and apathy, both side effects of using marijuana, make it harder to feel like you belong. Studies have shown that students are more likely to graduate when they feel like they fit in with their peers. After prolonged marijuana use, you're more likely to forget your friend's birthday or the date of your next exam, and you're less likely to make a clever joke. Slowed motor skills make it harder to be competitive in sports. All in all, the effects of marijuana use leave students at a serious disadvantage.

SO WHAT DO WE KNOW?

Marijuana, the most commonly used illicit drug, can be harmful and addictive. The people most at risk are teenagers, pregnant women and those with a history of mental illness. We know students should avoid



“Pot negatively affects many of the skills necessary for academic success, such as memory, focus, and comprehension.”



marijuana use because of its short-term effects, and since the long-term effects of marijuana are unclear.

Even though it is legal in some states, marijuana use is still a serious crime in most. Even in states where marijuana is legal, the legal age is 21. Being caught using pot could lead to jail time and other serious consequences, such as losing your job or getting kicked out of school.

But wait, that's not all! Using marijuana also causes other major life problems. Smoke pot and you're more likely to smoke cigarettes and drink alcohol. Drive high and you're twice as likely to be involved in a fatal car crash. Studies show that 58% of heavy pot smokers are more likely to be arrested for a crime and seven times more likely to commit a violent crime.

Add it all up and using marijuana doesn't make a lot of sense. Keep your mind clear, your goals in sight, and work hard for the successful future you deserve. Your future looks bright, weed-free. Don't let drug use stop you from reaching your goals!