

A CONSTANTLY SHIFTING ATTITUDE

Once portrayed as a drug that would cause psychosis, violence, and sex crimes, marijuana's reputation has changed over the decades. Recent polling reflects that the majority of Americans support the legalization of marijuana. Medical marijuana use is legal in a number of states, while only a few states have legalized recreational use.

Marijuana has essentially been "normalized." Unfortunately, the more people condone smoking marijuana, the easier it is to overlook or forget the harmful consequences that can occur.

MARIJUANA'S SHORT-TERM EFFECTS

Within seconds of smoking marijuana, users will begin to feel the effects. The active ingredient in marijuana, delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), enters the bloodstream and once it reaches the brain, it binds to receptors and alters the level of neurotransmitters. It's this change in brain chemistry that helps to create the high associated with marijuana. THC affects the areas of the brain that are responsible for motor control and memory, resulting in a lack of coordination and problems with short-term memory.

The high can also include feelings of paranoia and anxiety, as well as distortions in the perception of time and an altered state of consciousness. The user may experience physical effects like an increased heart rate, fluctuations in blood pressure, reddening of the eyes, and a dry mouth.

62%
of teens in drug treatment
are dependent on marijuana.

STONE COLD FACTS:

Over 18 million Americans
currently use marijuana.

4.2 million Americans are
dependent on or abuse marijuana.

Marijuana is the second leading
substance for which people
seek treatment.

Driving within three hours of
smoking marijuana doubles
the risk of being injured or
killed in an accident.

Marijuana is one of the major
causes for ER visits.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Go to www.intheknowzone.com for more information on substance abuse. Increase your knowledge using the information, statistics, images, and links. Test your understanding with a quick quiz.

**Don't stay in the dark.
Get In the Know!**

in the know

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MARIJUANA IS DANGEROUS

legal or not





LONG-TERM EFFECTS

Regular marijuana smokers risk damaging the cells in their bronchial passages, which help to protect against inhaled microorganisms, bacteria, and tumor cells. There's also a heightened risk for respiratory tract infections and lung cancer, as marijuana smoke contains four times more tar than cigarette smoke. Marijuana smoke decreases the amount of oxygen in the bloodstream and makes users more prone to early wrinkles.

Chronic marijuana users who start using in adolescence and continue into adulthood frequently show decreased cognitive abilities and are at a greater risk for developing mental illnesses. These marijuana users will also suffer from long-term adverse effects on their memory and learning abilities, sometimes lasting for years.

Babies born to women who use marijuana during their pregnancy are more likely to have a lower birth weight, poorer eye sight, and tremors. They are also at a greater risk

of developing asthma and other respiratory issues. These children frequently go on to develop poor reasoning abilities, impulsive and delinquent behaviors, and hyperactivity. After age 10, these difficulties may come to include underachievement at school, depression, anxiety, and reading problems. Such issues may last into adolescence and even adulthood.

AND EVEN MORE CONSEQUENCES...

Marijuana's effects on learning, memory, coordination, and consciousness have lasting consequences. Heavy marijuana users frequently identify as having lower life satisfaction, more relationship problems, and poorer health than non-users with similar backgrounds.

Teenagers who regularly smoke marijuana get lower grades and are more likely to drop out. Adult marijuana users take more time off from work and report less career success than their non-smoking peers.

Marijuana and driving are a bad mix. It is the most common illegal drug involved with auto fatalities and it's found in the blood of about 14 percent of drivers who die in auto accidents. Stoned drivers are less alert, impacting their abilities to judge distances and to react to other drivers, pedestrians, and traffic signals. They are a risk to themselves and everyone else on the road.

MORE THC MEANS A GREATER DANGER

THC levels in marijuana have been steadily rising. In the mid-1970s, average THC levels were less than 1 percent. In 2012, average THC concentrations were found to be 15 percent, with some strains having up to 37 percent. Higher levels of THC means a higher risk of unpredictable reactions, especially among new users.

Increased potency means that experienced users face a higher risk of addiction. About 9 percent of users become addicted to marijuana. Those who start using marijuana as teenagers have an addiction rate of 17 percent. Over 25 percent of daily users are addicted. Withdrawal from marijuana can be just as difficult as withdrawal from other drugs, with symptoms including anxiety, insomnia, irritability, and increased aggression.

WHAT ABOUT MEDICAL MARIJUANA?

Classified as a Schedule I drug, the DEA defines marijuana as having no currently



accepted medical use in treatment, while also having a high potential for abuse. Even though more states continue to legalize medical marijuana, the FDA has not found that the benefits of marijuana outweigh the risks.

While there is the potential for medical uses from the other 105 unique cannabis compounds in marijuana, there have not been adequate studies to support their usefulness.

MARIJUANA - MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE

Just because marijuana might be legal in some states, that doesn't mean that it's any less harmful. There's a reason that most countries, and most of the United States, consider marijuana illegal – it's a dangerous substance that can have numerous negative consequences. Don't be fooled into thinking otherwise.

Protect yourself, and your future, from the perils of marijuana.

Heavy marijuana users frequently identify as having lower life satisfaction, more relationship problems, and poorer health than non-users with similar backgrounds.