

MARIJUANA



**10 Ways Short-term
Marijuana Smoking
Hurts Users**

**A Weed by Any Name:
ID-ing Marijuana**

**Could Marijuana
Keep You Out
of College?**


**Brain Drain:
Marijuana and
Your Grades**

**22 Signs of
a Possible
Drug Problem**

**bummed,
busted, and
burned out**

MARIJUANA

Do Without It



Whatever it seems like, the fact is that most teens are not smoking marijuana. A recent study shows that four out of five 12- to 17-year-olds don't smoke marijuana.

TRUE, there are songs about getting "high" or "stoned," and characters in movies may smoke marijuana.

TRUE, people wear shirts with marijuana leaves on them or make jokes about using marijuana.

But the numbers tell this story:

Most of the marijuana use in young people (ages 12-17) is concentrated in a small group.

The take-home message?

Saying "no, thanks" to marijuana does not mean the end of your social life. It is a healthy choice that others should respect, and it is a choice you can live with.

Read on to learn more...

Marijuana Profile

Stay away from marijuana and stay cool. Learn to know marijuana if you see it and understand any talk about it.

Background and Physical Description

Marijuana comes from the hemp plant *Cannabis sativa*. The drug is a green, gray, or brown mixture of the cannabis plant's leaves, stems, flowers, and seeds.



The drug is usually sold in small plastic bags. A "dime bag" costs \$10; it holds about one marijuana cigarette (a "joint," "nail," "f," or a "blunt" when mixed into a cigar).

Marijuana may also be smoked in a pipe called a bong. It is sometimes mixed into tea or foods (like brownies).

Marijuana smells sweet and slightly rotten, sharp and musty.

Marijuana in Use



Identities

There are dozens of street names for marijuana. "Pot" and "weed" are probably the most common. Others are:

Grass
Bud
Skunk
Chronic
Dope
Herb
Boom
Mary Jane

Inside Dope

Let's pretend.

Let's pretend for a minute that "all natural" means something important when it comes to drugs.

OK. Minute's over. Some marijuana users like to pretend that because marijuana is a natural plant it is not harmful. Wrong.

Marijuana contains over 400 chemicals. One of them is *benzopyrene*, which is a leading cause of tobacco-related lung cancer. Marijuana contains an average of 50% more benzopyrene than tobacco does.

The main chemical in marijuana is *delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol*, also called THC. The more THC marijuana contains, the more it will affect the user, mentally and physically.

The amount of THC in street marijuana can be as low as .01%, or it can be one thousand times as strong—10% THC. Such a wide range means that the effects of marijuana can be wildly unpredictable.

No pretending now. Marijuana may be all natural, but it is still a drug, full of dangerous chemicals.

Hello in There . . .

If breaking the law and emptying your wallet are not bad enough, marijuana can also slam the door on your personality. How? It's called amotivational syndrome.

Let's break the name down:

A = "Anti" or "away from"

Motivation = The energy and excitement people have for living life

Syndrome = A group of medical signs that are seen together

So...

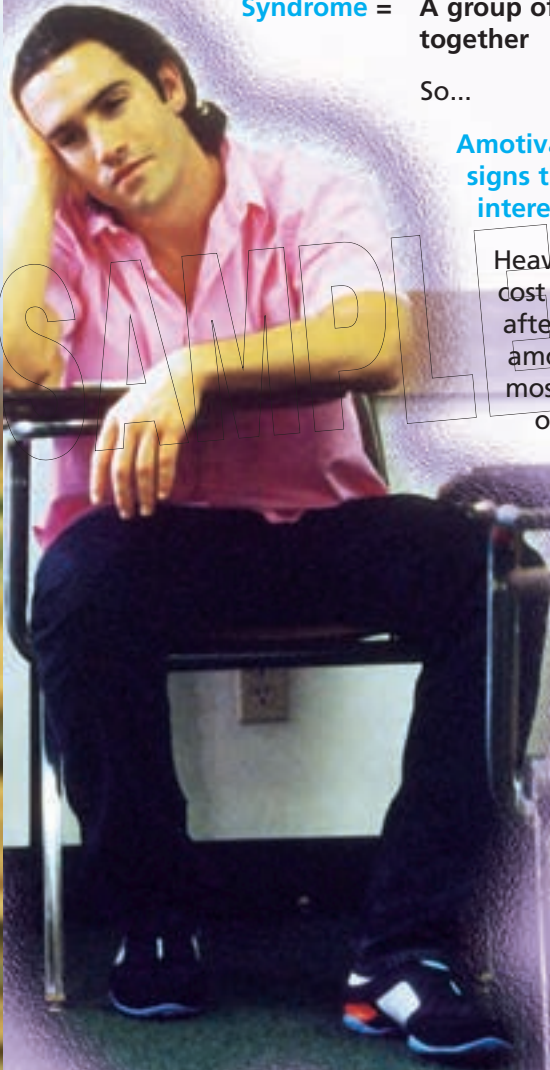
Amotivational syndrome= A group of signs that show that someone is not interested in life

Heavy, ongoing marijuana use can cost users their interest in going after their goals. People with amotivational syndrome spend most of their time getting, using, or thinking about marijuana.

They may stop taking care of their appearance, playing sports, or keeping up with their hobbies. They often neglect relationships—except with their pot-smoking friends.

Amotivational syndrome means that users are burned out. They may look like themselves on the outside, but inside they are empty, dull, and lazy.

Don't be a burnout. Choose not to use marijuana.



BEST FRIENDS

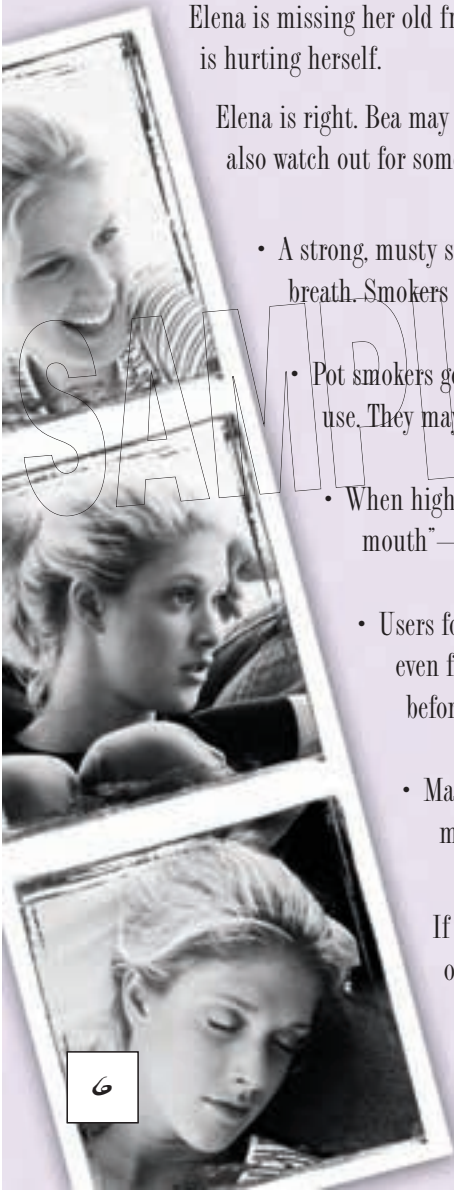
Elena suspects that her friend Bea has been smoking marijuana. Bea is moody. Sometimes she is totally giggly and silly. Other times she worries that the police are watching her. She has low energy. She doesn't take care of herself. Elena is missing her old friend. She is worried that Bea is hurting herself.



Elena is right. Bea may be using marijuana or other drugs. Elena can also watch out for some physical signs that Bea may be using marijuana:

- A strong, musty smell clings to clothes, hair, and breath. Smokers use many breath mints.
- Pot smokers get red, bloodshot eyes with each use. They may use a lot of eye drops.
- When high, users are often thirsty—"cotton mouth"—and hungry—"the munchies."
- Users forget things that just happened or even forget what they were talking about before their conversation is over.
- Marijuana can make a person clumsy or make him or her stumble while walking.

If you think your friend is using marijuana or other drugs, talk it out. Let your pals know that you care about their health and safety.



Check out these online information sources to learn more about marijuana, other drugs, and your good health.

Smart Surf



Keep it Real

Interactive site with great information on marijuana's effects on the brain.

www.keep-it-real.us

TeensHealth

Tons of health and safety tips, including marijuana info

<http://teenshealth.org>



NIDA for Teens

Articles and information on marijuana and other drugs.

<http://teens.drugabuse.gov>



Above the Influence

Packed full of information on marijuana and drug abuse. Includes real stories from real kids.

www.abovetheinfluence.com



Weed-Weak

In the Short Term:

- Problems with memory and learning
- Changes in senses of sight, hearing, and touch
- Lost sense of time passing
- Difficulty thinking and solving problems
- Poor coordination—could cause accidents
- Faster heart rate
- Feelings of stress or of being in danger
- Daily cough
- More colds than usual
- Higher rate of lung infections, like bronchitis

How Marijuana Saps Your Strength

Fast Fact

Between 1998 and 2008, the number of people who went to treatment centers for help quitting marijuana increased in all 50 states. In fact, over all admissions for marijuana addiction treatment was up 30% across the country.

No matter what anyone may tell you, marijuana affects users' health, even after only a few uses.

The more someone uses it, the more serious the damage can be. Doctors still do not know all of the effects of using marijuana for a long time. Many, like increased risk of lung cancer, are known.

Over the Long Term:

- More bronchitis and pneumonia
- Increased risk of lung cancer
- Greater chance of heart attacks
- Decreased ability to fight diseases
- Delayed puberty in males
- Problems with menstrual cycle
- Possible difficulty fathering babies or carrying a pregnancy to term
- Damage to memory—possibly permanent

and Hurts Your Health

Someone who smokes 1-3 joints (marijuana cigarettes) per day gets about the same amount of lung damage as someone who smokes 5 times as many tobacco cigarettes! That also means they have 5 times the risk of lung cancer.

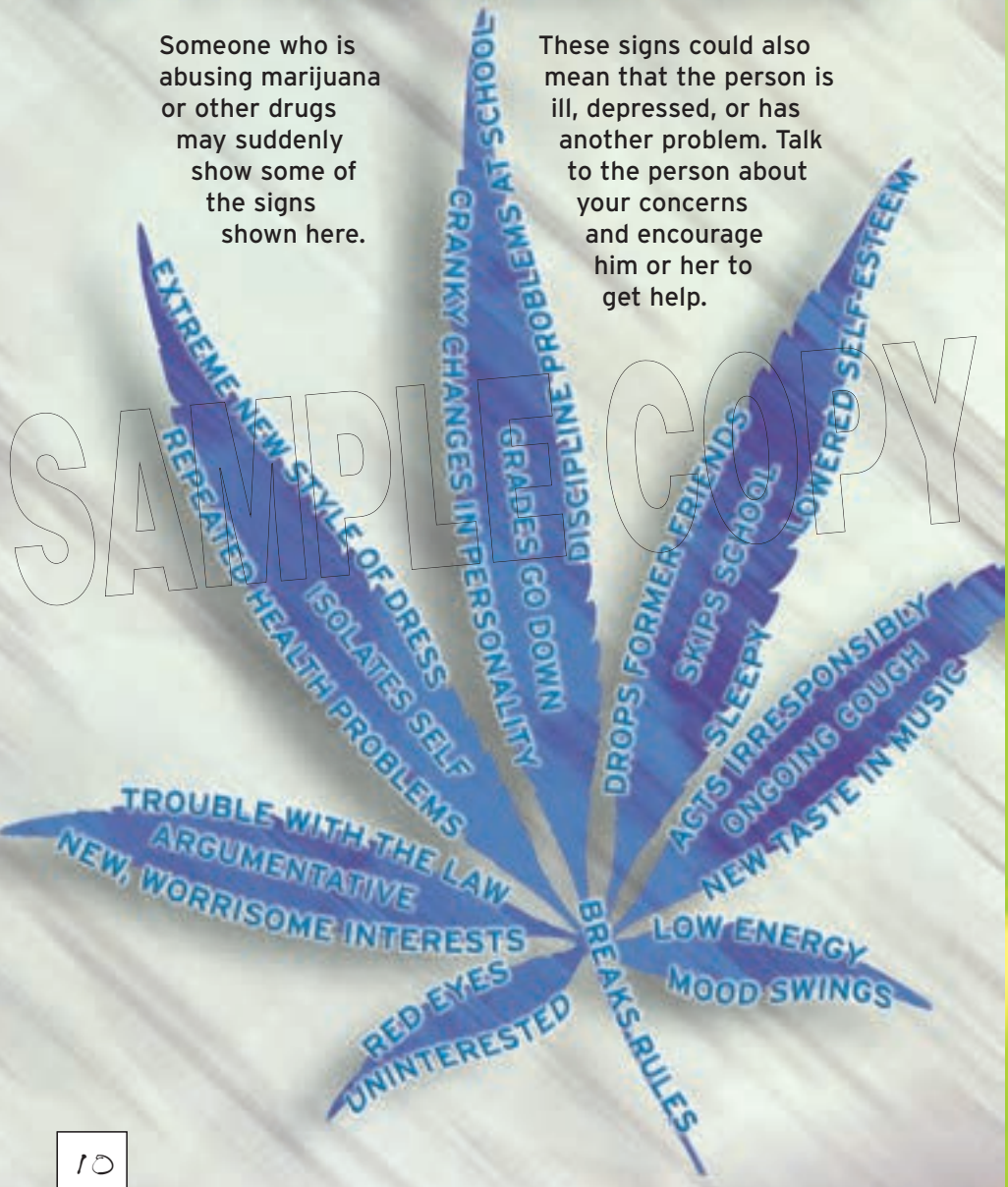
Fast Fact

Warning Signs of Problem Use

Someone who is abusing marijuana or other drugs may suddenly show some of the signs shown here.

These signs could also mean that the person is ill, depressed, or has another problem. Talk to the person about your concerns and encourage him or her to get help.

SAMPLE COPY



Some people who smoke marijuana will try to tell you that it is not addictive. They say they can quit anytime.

Psychiatrists diagnose addiction by looking at how a person acts when using. A drug user who shows some of these signs may be addicted:

tolerance

A drug addict takes more and more of the drug to feel the same old effects.

withdrawal

Someone who is addicted to a drug has uncomfortable physical or emotional feelings when they stop using it.

loss of control

Addicts want to limit their drug use, but they can't.

preoccupation

Addicted people spend most of their time thinking about the drug and how to get it.

persistence

Addicted people keep using drugs even though they get in trouble or have health problems.

Your Assessment

Think about people you have met who smoke marijuana. Do they... Smoke more than they used to? Act cranky when they haven't smoked in a while? Talk about getting high? Take extra risks to get marijuana? These could show possible addiction.

YOUR OWN BEST FRIENDS

They keep you from running around naked on a hot day. They keep you from yelling at your teachers. They keep you from stealing candy bars. They are your **inhibitions**, and they keep you out of a lot of trouble.

Someone high on marijuana—just like someone drunk on alcohol—has lowered inhibitions. That means they are likely to do things while high that they would never do while sober.

Inhibitions protect what is important to our lives, our health, and ourselves. Without them, we are in danger. People who are high may take risks, because they do not think about the consequences.

BREAKING THE LAW

Some users commit crimes while they are high. About half of juveniles arrested in major U.S. cities test positive for marijuana. Maybe they would have committed crimes anyway, but being high definitely got in the way of making smart choices.

RECKLESS DRIVING

People who have been smoking marijuana may drive under the influence.

That's just as dangerous as driving drunk. In one study, 1/3 of people arrested for reckless driving tested positive for marijuana.



TRU

UNWISE AND UNSAFE SEX

People who are high on marijuana may choose to have sex, even if they normally would not have it. They may be sexually active long before they should. Some may find themselves being intimate with strangers. Others may not be aware enough to protect themselves from sexual assaults.



These users expose themselves to the chance of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV / AIDS.

STAY TRUE

It's a poor choice to let your inhibitions be lowered by marijuana or any drug. A few healthy inhibitions help you stay true to your values and to stay true to you.

STAY TRUE TO YOU

Locked Out or Locked Up:

Marijuana Can Change Your Life

Of course you know that marijuana is an illegal drug, but have you thought about all of the consequences smoking marijuana could have in your life?

Since 1998, if you have any drug convictions on your record, you will not be eligible for any federal student aid. That means you will not be able to borrow money for college or technical school under any federal program. You will not receive any federal grants or work-study assistance for education.


Some employers screen applicants for drug convictions, too.



If you are convicted of using, carrying, or selling marijuana, you could go to jail, pay large fines, and be sent to mandatory drug treatment. You could also lose your driving privileges.

If you are using, carrying, or selling marijuana at school, you can be expelled, and the police will be called.

Using marijuana puts your future in serious jeopardy.

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2. Cancer-causing chemical found in marijuana and tobacco
5. Marijuana damages this brain function — permanently perhaps?
8. Group of signs show lack of interest
10. Main mind-altering chemical in marijuana
11. Water pipe for smoking marijuana
12. These keep your clothes on. Marijuana breaks them down.
16. Pay for this yourself if you have a drug conviction
17. Uncomfortable feelings when addict can't use drug
18. Do this every day if you smoke marijuana
19. Spend some time here if cops catch you using marijuana
- Across

Trash Talk

Marijuana may be trash, but talking about it is valuable. The more you know about marijuana, the less likely you are to use it. Here's a handful of marijuana words you have read about in this magazine. Test yourself!




SAMPLE COPY

Down

1. Lung disease from smoking that kills
3. Addict's continued use of drug even after consequences
4. Something illegal that some marijuana users do = trouble
6. With "sativa," the source of marijuana
7. Marijuana mixed into a cigar
9. Percent of teens who've never tried marijuana
11. Lung infection common in smokers
13. "Need" for more drug to feel same effects
14. Could get these by making sex decisions while high
15. Number of cigarettes that harm lungs equal to one daily joint

Puzzle Answers
 Across (2) BENZOPIRENE; (5) MEMORY; (8) AMOTIVATIONAL; (10) THC; (11) BONG; (12) INHIBITORS; (16) EDUCATION; (17) WITHDRAWAL; (18) COUGH; (19) JAIL. Down (1) CANCER; (3) PERSISTENCE; (4) CRIME; (6) CANNABIS; (7) BLUNT; (9) EIGHTYSIX; (11) BRONCHITIS; (13) TOLERANCE; (14) STDs; (15) FIVE

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- About 80% of teenagers do not use marijuana.
 - Almost half of pot smokers studied could not remember what they had read if they had been smoking marijuana.
 - Young people who use marijuana are 104 times more likely to go on to use cocaine than other young people are.

FACTS TO GO!