



MARIJUANA ABUSE



Marijuana is one of the most popular drugs used among adolescents and young adults. It can be smoked, brewed, mixed into foods and even vaped. The mind-altering chemical in marijuana that causes a person to “get high” is THC (delta-9-tetrahydro-cannabinol). Over 158 million people around the world use marijuana. That’s more than 3.8% of the planet’s population.

The increasing public debate about loosening the laws on marijuana and making it legal for medical and recreational use has minimized the way teens perceive the harmful effects and risks of using marijuana. But adverse effects resulting from marijuana abuse has sent many young people to the Emergency Room more than any other drug.



MARIJUANA EFFECTS

The effects of marijuana use can vary dramatically from person to person. Some users may enjoy it and feel a sense of euphoria and relaxation. Other users may experience a panic attack or confusion, anxiety, paranoia and fear. Some users may even experience delusions, hallucinations, and a loss of their personal identity when using large doses. Marijuana effects can last around 1-3 hours.



Some common effects of marijuana use:

- Increased heart rate
- An increase in appetite
- Laughing uncontrollably
- Short attention span
- Impaired short-term memory
- Loss of coordination and balance
- Altered perception of time

IS MARIJUANA ADDICTIVE?

Marijuana is addictive. This becomes evident when a person tries to quit, but can't even though it is affecting his or her life.

When someone who is addicted and tries to quit, they may experience withdrawal symptoms that can last up to 2 weeks. These symptoms may include cravings, restlessness, irritability and a decreased appetite.





IS MARIJUANA A “GATEWAY” DRUG?

Marijuana can be a “gateway” to other drugs according to people who have recovered from drug addiction. Not everyone agrees that this is the case. But if you ask some of the Narconon Fresh Start program graduates, they will probably tell you similar stories about how they started off smoking weed and then later tried other drugs.

Research does show that marijuana use can “prime” the brain for other drugs and so can tobacco and alcohol. Either way, story after story from real people who have lived through addiction to tell their story points to the idea that marijuana can be a “gateway” to other drugs.

MARIJUANA'S MENTAL EFFECTS ON THE BRAIN

Marijuana abuse can have long-term effects on the brain. Studies suggest that marijuana abuse can cause brain damage and that it can cause even more damage to the brain when young. The degree of impairment depends on when the individual started using, how much and for how long. These effects include impairment of memory, learning, understanding, thinking and problem-solving and a loss of IQ and even schizophrenia.

MARIJUANA'S HEALTH EFFECTS ON THE BODY

The risk of a heart attack within the first hour of smoking marijuana is nearly five times greater for a person than his or her normal risk. This is because marijuana use increases the heart rate which raises the blood pressure and reduces the blood's capacity to carry oxygen.



Cardiovascular health risks can develop in users causing a person to experience a head rush or to faint and fall when standing up. This is known as orthostatic hypotension.

Like tobacco smoke, marijuana smoke can irritate the throat and lungs and cause heavy coughing during use. Marijuana smokers often inhale as much smoke as they can and hold it in their lungs for as long as they can. The toxic particles and chemicals can damage the lungs and cause inflammation and airway resistance. Hyperinflation of the lungs may occur and bronchitis symptoms can develop. The respiratory system's immune system can become weak which can lead to pneumonia or other respiratory infections.

Though research hasn't found a direct link between marijuana abuse and lung cancer, marijuana smoke contains cancer causing combustion products.

Some studies have however, shown a link between marijuana use and testicular cancer predominantly in young adult males. Marijuana's contribution to testicular cancer can accumulate in just a few years of using.

USING MARIJUANA DURING PREGNANCY

Babies who were born to women using marijuana while pregnant have shown to have problems with neurological development and are more likely to have difficulty in their ability to remain attentive and in their memory and problem-solving skills.



SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF MARIJUANA ABUSE

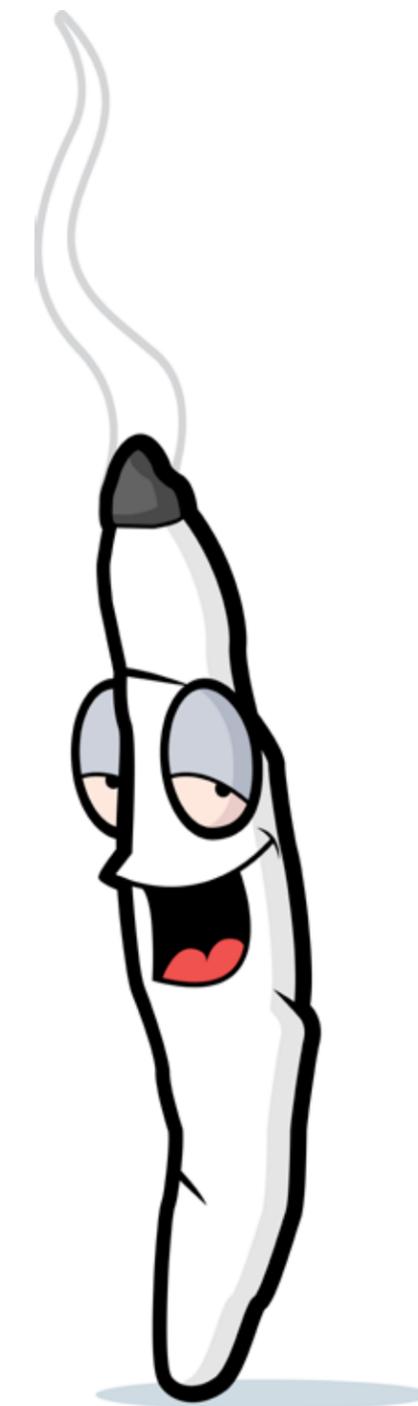
Marijuana abuse can have different effects on people depending when the person used. For instance, if the person just used, he or she may seem more happy and energetic. If it has been a few hours, the person may appear sleepy.

Findings of paraphernalia such as pipes and rolling papers or cigars can most definitely be a sign of marijuana abuse.

Someone who has been abusing marijuana for some time will begin to lose interest in school or work and may be more careless about their duties and performance or just quit going all together. The person may drop their goals, hobbies and expectations and get a new set of friends. They usually withdraw from the family and seem to lose all interest in life.

Immediate Signs and Symptoms of Marijuana Abuse

- Burnt rope odor
- Red and glazed eyes
- Laughing for no apparent reason
- Bigger appetite for snacks and sweets
- Confused
- Foggy memory
- Lack of coordination
- Slurred speech
- More sociable than usual
- Dropping interest or activities
- Withdrawal from family
- Lowered inhibitions
- Altered time perception
- Impaired judgment
- Lethargic



HOW TO HELP SOMEONE QUIT MARIJUANA

If you or someone you love needs help with marijuana addiction, call a Narconon Fresh Start drug rehab specialist today at **855-734-2223**. We can go over your treatment options and help you take the next step needed to get off marijuana. We help restore those who have been affected by the harmful effects of drugs back to a clean and sober life by flushing out all of the drug toxins and by teaching people how to live a happier and more productive life without drugs.





DRUG ABUSE HELP LINE
1-855-734-2223

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE
NARCONON FRESH START PROGRAM

www.freshstart.net