



MARIJUANA

Marijuana is the word used to describe the dried flowers, seeds and leaves of the Indian hemp plant. On the street, it is called by many other names, such as: astro, turf, bhang, dagga, dope, ganja, grass, hemp, home grown, J, Mary Jane, pot, reefer, roach, Texas tea and weed.

This drug is a **hallucinogen**—a substance which distorts how the mind perceives the world you live in.

Hashish is a related form of the drug, made from the resins of the Indian hemp plant. Also called chocolate, hash or shit, it is on average six times stronger than marijuana.

Cannabis describes any of the different drugs that come from Indian hemp, including marijuana and hashish.

Marijuana is the most commonly used illegal drug in the world.

Global Statistics of Marijuana Use as Given by the United Nations:

- According to the United Nations, 158.8 million people around the world use marijuana—more than 3.8% of the planet's population.
- Over 94 million people in the US have admitted using it at least once.
- According to the 2007 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2.1 million people in the US abused marijuana for the first time that year.
- Among 12 to 17 year olds, 6.7% were current marijuana users in 2007.
- According to US government estimates, domestic marijuana production has increased tenfold over the last twenty-five years: from 1,000 metric tons (2.2 million pounds) in 1981 to 10,000 metric tons (22 million pounds) in 2006. Not surprisingly, 58% of those aged 12 to 17 state that pot is easy to obtain. US marijuana users spent approximately \$10.5 billion on the drug in the year 2000.
- In 2005, 242,200 emergency room visits in the United States involved marijuana.
- According to the US Drug Enforcement Administration, a large percentage of those arrested for crimes test positive for marijuana. Nationwide, 40% of adult males tested positive at the time of their arrest.
- Of adults 26 or older who used marijuana before age 15, 62% went on to use cocaine at some point in their lives; 9% went on to use heroin at least once; and 54% made some nonmedical use of mind-altering prescription drugs.

- Next to alcohol, marijuana is the second most frequently found substance in the bodies of drivers involved in fatal automobile accidents.

How is Marijuana Used?

Marijuana is usually smoked as a cigarette (joint), but may also be smoked in a pipe.

Less often, it is mixed with food and eaten or brewed as tea.

Sometimes users open up cigars and remove the tobacco, replacing it with pot—called a “blunt.”

Joints and blunts are sometimes laced with other, more powerful drugs, such as crack cocaine or PCP (phencyclidine, a powerful hallucinogen).

A more concentrated, higher THC content, resinous form of marijuana, is called hashish and, as a sticky black liquid, hash oil.

Marijuana smoke has a pungent and distinctive, usually sweet-and-sour odor.

Marijuana is sometimes laced with crack cocaine and/or hallucinogen phencyclidine (PCP), making marijuana more dangerous.

Short Term Effects:

When a person smokes a joint, he usually feels its effect within minutes. The immediate sensations include:

- Sensory distortion
- Panic
- Anxiety
- Poor coordination of movement
- Lowered reaction time
- After an initial “high,” the user feels sleepy or depressed
- A “dreamy,” or unreal state of mind peaks within the first 30 minutes
- Increased heartbeat (and risk of heart attack)

These short-term effects usually wear off in two to three hours, but they could last longer depending on how much the user takes, the potency of THC and the presence of other drugs added into the mix.

Long Term Effects:

- Reduced resistance to common illnesses (colds, bronchitis, etc.)
- Suppression of the immune system
- Growth disorders
- Increase of abnormally structured cells in the body
- Reduction of male sex hormones
- Rapid destruction of lung fibers and lesions (injuries) to the brain could be permanent
- Reduced sexual capacity

- Study difficulties: reduced ability to learn and retain information
- Apathy, drowsiness, lack of motivation
- Personality and mood changes
- Inability to understand things clearly

As the typical user inhales more smoke and holds it longer than he would with a cigarette, a joint creates a severe impact on one's lungs.

Aside from the discomfort that goes with sore throats and chest colds, it has been found that consuming one joint gives as much exposure to cancer-producing chemicals as smoking five cigarettes.

The mental consequences of marijuana use are equally severe. Marijuana smokers have poorer memories and mental aptitude than do non-users.

Those who smoke marijuana continuously may be constantly at a suboptimal mental state to those who do not.

Marijuana Addiction Risks - (THC) The Main Culprit

The level of *delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)* content in marijuana after cultivation can range from less than 1% to more than 30% and has been increasing dramatically, making marijuana increasingly potent and more addictive.

THC flows rapidly from the lungs to the bloodstream. Once in the blood stream the chemical gains entrance into many of the body's main organs, including the brain.

THC has potential to impair learning and memory ability for weeks after use. The result is consequential. THC stays in the body for weeks, possibly months, depending on the length and intensity of usage.

Marijuana contains more than 400 known chemicals, including the same cancer-causing substances found in tobacco smoke.

THC damages the immune system.

Signs of Marijuana Use:

- Bloodshot eyes
- Smells like marijuana (sweet smell)
- Drowsiness
- Uncoordinated, awkward movements
- Giggling or being silly

Sources & Resources:

<http://drugabuse.gov/infofacts/marijuana.html>

<http://teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/marijuana>

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<http://www.edrugrehab.com/3-signs-of-marijuana-use.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legality_of_cannabis_by_country

<http://www.drugfreeworld.org/drugfacts/marijuana/the-harmful-effects.html>