

# Marijuana

This report was prepared for parents by Southwest Prevention & Education Services as a quick reference guide to marijuana. For additional information please view the other downloads on our website:  
[www.southwestprevention.com](http://www.southwestprevention.com).

## Facts:

- Marijuana comes from the plant CANNABIS SATIVA
- Marijuana is the most commonly abused drug in the United States.
- Marijuana is responsible for appx. 16% of all admissions to treatment facilities (TEDS Data – 2007).
- The average age of onset for smoking marijuana is 11 (Southwest Utah).

## Appearance:

### Marijuana comes in three forms:

- Dry, shredded, brown and green mix of flowers, stems, seeds, and leaves.



- More concentrated, resinous form (called Hashish).



- As a sticky liquid (called Hash Oil).



Past year use of marijuana among 8<sup>th</sup> graders significantly declined from 11.7% in 2006 to 10.3% in 2007, and is down from its 1996 peak of 10.3 percent.

Young people who use marijuana weekly have double the risk of depression later in life.

Teens aged 12 - 17 who smoke marijuana weekly are three times more likely than non-users to have suicidal thoughts.

## How Marijuana is Used/Abused:

- Usually smoked as a cigarette or in a pipe.
- Sometimes smoked in a blunt (a cigar emptied of tobacco and filled with marijuana). Tobacco leaves are used to wrap a cigar, which adds nicotine and other chemicals to the marijuana.
- Can be mixed in food, (baking brownies with marijuana is a popular trend) or brewed as a tea.
- Smoked through a bong or vaporized.

## The Affects of Marijuana:

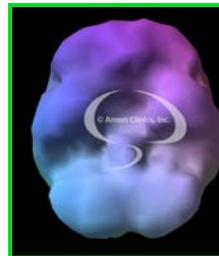
When smoked, THC (the active chemical in marijuana) rapidly passes from the lungs into the bloodstream, which carries it to the brain and other organs.

### The Brain

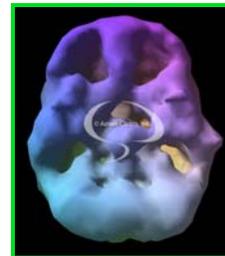
- THC acts upon specific sites in the brain, called cannabinoid receptors and cellular reactions cause a “high”.
- Some areas of the brain have many cannabinoid receptors, others have none. The highest density of receptors are in the parts that influence pleasure, memory, thoughts, concentration, sensory and time perception, and coordinated movement.

### **THC intoxication can cause:**

- Distorted perceptions
- Impaired coordination
- Difficulty in thinking and problem solving
- Impact on learning and memory can last for days to weeks after the acute effects wear off. Thus, smoking marijuana can lead to suboptimal intellectual functioning.
- Long term use can have an effect on the stress-response system and changes in the activity of nerve cells containing dopamine (dopamine neurons are involved in the regulation of motivation and reward.)
- Problems with learning
- Memory problems
- Decreased activity in the posterior temporal lobes bilaterally.



Normal Brain



18-year-old after 3 years of marijuana use

*Brain SPECT Images taken from the Amen Clinic ([www.amenclinic.com](http://www.amenclinic.com)).*

### The Heart & Lungs

- Increase in blood pressure.
- Increase in heart rate.
- Reduced oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood.
- Abusers risk of heart attack more than quadruples in the first hour after smoking marijuana.
- More frequent acute chest illness.
- A heightened risk of lung infections.
- Greater tendency for obstructed airway

### The Lungs

- Contains 50-70 percent more carcinogenic hydrocarbons than tobacco smoke.
- Users typically inhale more deeply and hold breath longer than tobacco smokers, increasing their exposure to chemicals and carcinogens.
- Marijuana smokers show dysregulated growth of epithelial cells in the lung tissues.

Annual prevalence of marijuana use has fallen by 33% among 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 25% among 20<sup>th</sup> graders, and 14% among 12<sup>th</sup> graders since 2001.

Marijuana use in some teens has been linked to increased risk for schizophrenia in later years.

The average age of onset for first time marijuana use in Southern Utah is 14 years old. Many kids use marijuana for the first time by age 10.

## Addictive Potential:

- Long term use can lead to addiction.
- Withdrawal symptoms manifest after one day, peak at 203 days, and subside 1-2 weeks after drug cessation.
- Long term abusers trying to quit report:
  - Irritability
  - Decreased appetite
  - Sleeplessness
  - Anxiety
  - Drug Craving

## Signs & Symptoms of Use:

- Glassy, red eyes
- A sweet burnt scent
- Loss of interest and motivation
- Weight gain or weight loss
- Memory loss/forgetfulness
- Difficulty Concentrating
- Loud talking and inappropriate laughter followed by sleepiness
- Heightened sense of visual, auditory and taste perception
- Increased blood pressure/heart rate
- Decreased coordination

## Common Slang Terms:

- Pot
  - Weed
  - Herb
  - Grass
  - Mary Jane
  - Ganja
  - Ace
  - Aunt Mary
  - Dope
  - Green
  - Gungun
  - Reefer
  - Skunk
  - Boom
  - Gangster
  - Kif
  - Bammy
  - Bamba
  - Buddha
  - Homegrown
  - Don Juan
  - Ditchweed
- Street Names for different "brands":
- Texas Tea
  - Maui Wowie
  - Chronic

## Paraphernalia:



**Rolling papers for handrolling joints.**



**Marijuana Blunt**



**Marijuana Bong**



**Marijuana Bong**



**Marijuana Pipe**



**Rolling Papers**