

Marijuana/Cannabis

- Approximately one out of every eleven people who use marijuana will become addicted to the drug.
- The likelihood of dependence on marijuana increases with more frequent usage; Individuals who have used marijuana at least five times have a 20 to 30 % likelihood of becoming addicted, and those who use is regularly have a 40% likelihood of becoming addicted. ¹
- The features and severity of withdrawal from marijuana use are virtually indistinguishable from those of nicotine (cigarette) withdrawal.
- Some symptoms of withdrawal from marijuana use are irritability, anger, cravings, decreased appetite, insomnia, interpersonal hypersensitivity, fatigue. ²
- A hallmark feature of addiction is psychosocial dysfunction: persistent procrastination, bad or guilty feelings, low productivity, low self-confidence, interpersonal or family conflicts, memory problems, and financial difficulties. This collection of symptoms has been referred to as “amotivational syndrome.” ^{1 & 3}

1. Budney, AJ & Moore, BA , 2002, *Development and consequences of cannabis dependence*, Journal of Clinical Pharmacology

2. Preuss, UW, Watzke, AB, Zimmerman, J, Wong, JWM & Schmidt, CO, 2010, *Cannabis withdrawal severity and short term course among cannabis-dependent adolescent and young adult inpatients*, Drug & Alcohol Dependence

3. Hubbard, JR, Franco, SE, & Onaivi, ES, 1999, *Marijuana: Medical Implications*. American Family Physician.

- Marijuana also effects the heart. Like nicotine, cannabis increases the heart rate, alters blood pressure, can induce a rapid or an irregular heartbeat, and decreases oxygen levels in the circulatory system. As a result, a person's risk of a heart attack is increased 400% during the first hour after smoking marijuana. ¹
- Marijuana has undisputed negative effects: distorted perceptions of reality, difficulty thinking and problem solving, problems with learning and memory, and impairment of motor coordination. These negative effects continue to affect a person long after the initial "high" has passed; impairment may last for days or weeks after this initial use.
- This means that individuals may wrongly believe that they are capable of performing certain tasks, such as driving a car, caring for children, or thinking and problem solving in a work-related capacity, when in fact they may be performing these tasks while still mildly or moderately impaired by the use of marijuana from days before. ^{1 & 2}

1 National Institute on Drug Abuse. 2005. Marijuana abuse. NIDA Research Report Series No 05-3859. Bethesda, MD: US Dept. of Health & Human Services.

2 National Institute on Drug Abuse. 2010. Drug Facts: Marijuana. US Dept. of Health & Human Services.

- You may have heard people argue that marijuana is a "gateway drug" to harder drug use. Some say this is a myth, others insist it is a fact. The truth is that there is a link. Research shows that the earlier you start using marijuana, the more likely you are to become dependent on it or other types of drugs later in life. ¹
- A number of studies have also shown an association between chronic marijuana use and increased rates of anxiety, depression and schizophrenia. ²
- Some may try to argue that the ability to drive is not affected by marijuana use, but this is FALSE. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, drugs other than alcohol (e.g., marijuana and cocaine) are involved in about 18 % of motor vehicle driver deaths. A recent survey found that 6.8 % of drivers who were involved in accidents tested positive for marijuana use (mostly under the age of 35); alcohol levels above the legal limit were found in 21 % of such drivers. ³

¹ Abovetheinfluence.com citing Drug Enforcement Agency. *Fiction: Marijuana is Harmless*, (http://www.justthinktwice.com/factsfiction/fiction_marijuana_is_harmless.html), Retrieved August 2011.

² National Institute on Drug Abuse. *Marijuana: An Update on the National Institute on Drug*, (<http://www.drugabuse.gov/tib/marijuana.html>), Published February 2011. Retrieved July 2011.

³ NIDA, <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana-abuse/does-marijuana-use-affect-driving>