

# Marijuana

## Just the Facts



**One major concern about marijuana is its possible effects on young people as they grow up. Research shows that the earlier people start using drugs, the more likely they are to go on to experiment with other dangerous drugs.**

**Additionally, when young people start using marijuana regularly, they often lose interest in schoolwork affecting academic success as well. Chronic marijuana use can place students both at risk of dropping out of school and possible encounters with law enforcement.**

### What are hash and sinsemilla?

**Taking the** resin from the leaves and flowers of the marijuana plant and pressing it into cakes or slabs make hashish. Hash may contain five to ten times as much THC as other forms of marijuana. Hashish (or hash), hash oil, and sinsemilla are stronger forms of marijuana.

### What is Marijuana?

**A green,** brown, or gray mixture of dried, shredded flowers and leaves of the hemp plant (*Cannabis Sativa*). Although all parts of the plant are mind-altering, the main ingredient in marijuana is THC. The amount of THC in the marijuana determines how strong its effects will be on the user. The strength of today's marijuana is much greater than the marijuana used in the early 1970's-increasing the possibilities of health problems for today's users.

### How is marijuana used?

**Usually smoked** as a cigarette, called a joint, or in a pipe or bong. Recently, it has appeared in hollowed-out cigars called blunts or swishers, which are more dangerous because they contain the equivalent of three to four joints.

### Are there short-term adverse effects to using marijuana?

**Yes. Acute** panic reaction is a common adverse reaction. Users describe this reaction as an extreme fear of losing control, which causes panic. The symptoms usually disappear in a few hours. The risk of other adverse reactions is even greater when other drugs and alcohol are mixed with marijuana.

### What are the immediate effects of smoking marijuana?

**Physical effects** of marijuana, along with intoxication, include red, bloodshot eyes, confusion and anxiety, loss of coordination, increased appetite, hallucinations, and a dry mouth and throat. Someone high on marijuana may seem giggly or silly for no reason and has trouble walking. Studies of marijuana's mental effects show that the drug can impair or reduce short-term memory, alter sense of time, and reduce ability to do things, which require concentration, swift reactions, and coordination.



# J u s t      T h e      F a c t s

## How long does marijuana stay in the body?

THC is strongly absorbed by fatty tissues in various organs and disrupts nerve cells in the part of the brain where memories are formed. Generally, traces of THC can be detected by a urine test several days after smoking marijuana. In chronic users, however, traces of THC can be detected weeks after they have stopped using marijuana.

## Does marijuana affect driving ability?

Research shows that driving skills are impaired for at least four to six hours after smoking a single joint, long after the high is gone. Marijuana affects a wide range of skills needed for safe driving. It slows the thought process and reflex abilities, making it hard for drivers to respond to sudden and unexpected events. Also, a driver's ability to stay in their lane through curves, brake quickly, and maintain speed and the proper distance between cars is affected. If a person drinks alcohol, along with using marijuana, the risk of an accident greatly increases.

## If someone uses marijuana during a pregnancy, is the baby at risk?

Some research studies suggest that marijuana use during pregnancy may result in premature and low birth weight babies who are at-risk of developing health problems. Researchers are not certain whether a newborn baby's health problems, if marijuana-related, will persist as the child matures.

## How are people usually introduced to marijuana?

Many young people are introduced to marijuana by their peers—usually acquaintances, friends, and siblings. People often try drugs such as marijuana because they feel peer pressure. They may think it's cool to use because they hear about it in pop music, movies, and TV programs

## What can parents do?

The good news is that children can be taught to resist social pressures to try drugs. Parents can help by becoming informed about marijuana, and by talking to their children about drug use. TCADA researchers have found that participation in extracurricular activities, the expression of parental disapproval of using marijuana, and parental attendance at school events can also protect against drug experimentation..

## Who should I contact if someone close to me has a problem with marijuana?

Contact the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse's toll-free hotline at 800.832.9623 or your local Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse for referral assistance. You may also contact your family physician, hospital, or yellow pages for other intervention and treatment options.

## Narcotics Tip Line 972-941-STOP

City of Plano Police Department  
909 14th Street  
Plano Texas 75074  
[www.planopolice.org](http://www.planopolice.org)

