

MARIJUANA

Cannabis is at least addictive as alcohol. It is quite different in its effects from alcohol, both immediate and long term, and cannabis addiction tends to be less obvious than alcohol addiction (alcoholism). However it is just as powerful. Because the cannabis in one smoke can take up to six weeks to leave the brain it leaks slowly out of the body, and there are no severe physical withdrawals like shakes or fits. However there are withdrawals like cravings, headaches, tension-states, irritability and difficulty in concentration. The regular pot smoker knows if he/she has a smoke, all these will be relieved. This is addiction.

Length of time in Body:

Alcohol from the wildest binge is out of the body some 48 hours after the last drink. Cannabis can take many weeks from the last dose to leave the body so be aware that the slow withdrawal from cannabis may affect you for months.

Effects of Cannabis on the Brain:

It interferes with learning. Cannabis causes memory problems, in proportion to how much is smoked. The bigger the dose, the greater the loss of functioning. Generally today's cannabis is much more potent than that grown ten years ago. Since it became trendy to smoke pot, countless case studies have shown how school and student performance falls off when regular pot smoking starts.

It interferes with Development of Personality.

If a teenager starts regular pot smoking, even one joint a week his/her personality does not develop normally. This is because that person always has cannabis in his/her brain. They are not 'high' all the time, but the drug is having a subtle but powerful effect in other ways.

They live their life not realising everything is being done under these effects. In particular there is poor memory, reduced attention and concentration (it may be a struggle even to read this pamphlet this far....) a tendency to depressive or even suicidal thoughts, and a turning inside one's self rather than outwardly to friends. If family and friends are suspicious because of the personality change and enquire, there is a necessity to tell lies about smoking, with later guilt and shame. When schooling suffers, or work deteriorates, there is a tendency to blame one's self- when it is really the chronic effects of the drug. The smoker then has a loss of self-esteem, and turns more to the easy 'high' that makes him/her feel 'OK'. So addiction develops further, and the emerging personality is further crippled by drug effects. The harm is now established beyond all doubt, and is merely dose dependent. The bigger the dose, the greater harm occurs. The chronic drug effects also produce an illusion of performance and are very insulating of what is really happening – a sort of mental cottonwool. It cannot be over-emphasised that this is a dose-dependent state; the higher the dose, the more obvious the problem is to others. Rationalisations, loss of insight and awareness in the user are distorted thinking and denial of the problem.

List of known Harmful Effects of Cannabis:

Can cause psychosis, usually lasting 1 –2 days, occasionally in vulnerable personalities months or years.
May cause substance induced schizophrenia
Warps sense of time
Can cause hallucinations
Interferes with car driving performance, causing accidents
May cause paranoia and deep suspicion
Cause poor memory and impairs learning
Lowers drive and impairs mental performance – a motivational syndrome.
Impairs lung function quicker than nicotine cigarettes (e.g. bronchitis and asthma)
Causes lung cancer and other cancers of the mouth and upper airways
Causes decreased sperm counts and lower average male hormone levels
Interferes with ovulation, fertility and the development of the unborn
Increases natural miscarriage rate in animals
Impairs immune response (so more susceptible to viruses, including AIDS.)
Increases suicide rate
Increases tendency to go on to other addictive drugs
Heavy use leads to shunning normal life, which becomes meaningless. Instead the addict spends more and more time intoxicated.

Some other products from RecoverOz on this subject include

[Dangerous Drugs](#) *An Easy-to-Use Reference for Parents and Professionals* provides information on marijuana and other drugs. Product Code: #1899 Hazelden by Carol Falkowski

[Greening Out DVD](#) 23 mins. Made in Australia, this is the most effective and watchable video on marijuana use available today. Product Code: #9804

[Marijuana - What's a Parent to Believe?](#)

Maybe you smoked pot as a teen, or you use marijuana today. Maybe you're simply confused over conflicting claims about the drug whether it's addictive, how harmful it is, why some think it should be legalised. The basic message is up to you, but you need to know the facts. Product Code: 2202

[Marijuana: Neurochemistry & Physiology](#)

*DVD, 37 mins. **Online preview available** when you 'click to see more.'* This DVD presents an objective non-judgemental examination of marijuana through the use of animation, graphics, interviews with current users and those in recovery. Product Code: #CNS314