

# Info

To learn more about marijuana or obtain referrals to programs in your community, contact one of the following toll-free numbers:

**SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information**

**800-729-6686**

**TDD 800-487-4889**

**linea gratis en español**

**877-767-8432**



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
Center for Substance Abuse Prevention  
[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

**The bottom line:** If you know someone who smokes marijuana, urge him or her to stop or get help. If you're smoking marijuana—stop! The longer you ignore the real facts, the more chances you take with your health and well-being. It's never too late. Talk to your parents, a doctor, a counselor, a teacher, or another adult you trust.

## Do it today!

Curious about the TV ads of the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign? Check out the Web site at [www.freevibe.com](http://www.freevibe.com) or visit the Office of National Drug Control Policy Web site at [www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov](http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov).

Q. Can marijuana be used as a medicine?  
A. While the active ingredient in marijuana, THC, can be manufactured in a pill available by prescription to treat nausea and vomiting associated with certain cancer treatments, scientists say that more research needs to be done on its side effects and other potential medical uses.<sup>9</sup>

Q. Can people become addicted to marijuana?  
A. Yes. Research confirms you can become hooked on marijuana.

Q. Isn't smoking marijuana less dangerous than smoking cigarettes?  
A. No. It's even worse. One joint affects the lungs as much as four cigarettes.<sup>8</sup>

# Q & A



# Marijuana



## The Truth About Marijuana

**Slang—Weed, Pot, Grass, Reefer, Ganja, Mary Jane, Blunt, Joint, Roach, Nail**

### Get the Facts...

**Marijuana affects your brain.** THC (the active ingredient in marijuana) affects the nerve cells in the part of the brain where memories are formed.

**Marijuana affects your self-control.** Marijuana can seriously affect your sense of time and your coordination, impacting things like driving. In the second half of 2003, nearly 80,000 people were admitted to emergency rooms suffering from marijuana-related problems.<sup>1</sup>

**Marijuana affects your lungs.** There are more than 400 known chemicals in marijuana. A single joint contains four times as much cancer-causing tar as a filtered cigarette.<sup>2</sup>

### Marijuana affects other aspects of your health.

Marijuana can limit your body's ability to fight off infection.<sup>3</sup> Heavy marijuana use also has been linked with depression, anxiety, and personality disturbances.<sup>4</sup>

**Marijuana is not always what it seems.** Marijuana can be laced with other dangerous drugs without your knowledge. "Blunts"—hollowed-out cigars filled with marijuana—sometimes have substances such as crack cocaine, PCP, or embalming fluid added.

**Marijuana can be addictive.** Not everyone who uses marijuana becomes addicted, but some users do develop signs of dependence. In 2002, more than 285,000 people entered drug treatment programs to kick their marijuana habit.<sup>5</sup>

### Before You Risk It...

**Know the law.** It is illegal to buy or sell marijuana. In most States, holding even small amounts of marijuana can lead to fines or arrest.

**Get the facts.** Smoking any substance—tobacco,

marijuana, or crack cocaine—increases your risk of developing pneumonia and other illnesses.<sup>6</sup>

**Stay informed.** It has not yet been proven that using marijuana leads to using other drugs. But very few people use other drugs without first using marijuana. Teens who smoke marijuana are more likely to try other drugs, in part because they have more contact with people who use and sell them.

**Know the risks.** Using marijuana or other drugs increases your risk of injury from car crashes, falls, burns, drowning, and other accidents.

**Keep your edge.** Marijuana affects your judgment, drains your motivation, and can make you feel anxious.

**Look around you.** Most teens aren't smoking marijuana. According to a 2004 study, about four out of five 12- to 17-year-old youths had never even tried marijuana.<sup>7</sup>

### Know the Signs...

#### How can you tell if a friend is using marijuana?

Sometimes it's tough to tell. But there are signs you can look for. If your friend has one or more of the following warning signs, he or she may be using marijuana:

- Seeming dizzy and having trouble walking
- Having red, bloodshot eyes and smelly hair and clothes
- Having a hard time remembering things that just happened
- Acting silly for no apparent reason

#### What can you do to help someone who is using marijuana or other drugs?

Be a real friend. Encourage your friend to seek professional help. For information and referrals, call the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information at 800-729-6686.

**For more information or for references to facts found in this *Tips for Teens*, go to [www.ncadi.samhsa.gov](http://www.ncadi.samhsa.gov).**