

# Marijuana Myths

*Myth #1: "Marijuana is not harmful because it's natural."*

**Facts:** Marijuana is a mixture of more than 425 chemicals that convert to thousands when smoked. Many of these chemicals are toxic.

- Poisonous pesticides and fungicides used to grow marijuana are absorbed by the plants and are passed on to the users.

*Myth #2: "Marijuana is not addictive."*

**Facts:** Marijuana is both physically and psychologically addictive.

- In 1999, the Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS) recorded more than 220,000 admissions for marijuana addiction. Between 1993-1999 one-third of those treated were aged 12 - 17 years of age.
- Recent research shows that marijuana causes physical dependence, tolerance, and a characteristic withdrawal syndrome. It affects the same area of the brain that causes addiction to other substances, eg., cocaine, heroin.

*Myth #3: "Marijuana is smoked to help people who are sick."*

**Facts:** Scientific studies often show the opposite is true; marijuana is damaging to individuals with serious illnesses.

- **AIDS:** Scientific studies indicate marijuana damages the immune system, causing further peril to already weakened immune systems. HIV-positive marijuana smokers progress to full-blown AIDS twice as fast as non-smokers and have an increased incidence of bacterial pneumonia.
- **Cancer:** Marijuana contains many cancer-causing substances, many of which are present in higher concentrations in marijuana than in tobacco. Also, people with cancer may get infections more easily and possibly die sooner if they use marijuana regularly.
- **Glaucoma:** Marijuana does not prevent blindness due to glaucoma.
- **Multiple Sclerosis:** Even if smoking marijuana does mask some of the symptoms, it undermines the immune system and does much more harm than good.

Marijuana isn't harmful because it's illegal...



It's illegal because it's harmful!

For more information

[www.adicbc.com](http://www.adicbc.com)  
[www.marijuana-info.org](http://www.marijuana-info.org)  
[www.streetdrugs.org](http://www.streetdrugs.org)  
[www.clubdrugs.org](http://www.clubdrugs.org)

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MARCOM — July 2002

# Marijuana

## What's the big deal?



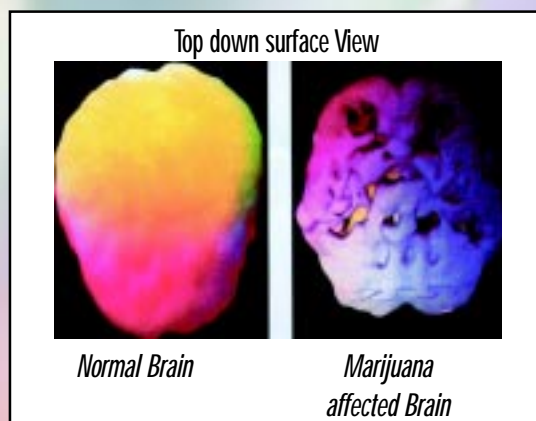
## The Big Deal is:

- *Marijuana is Harmful*
- *Marijuana is Illegal*

## Marijuana Use Damages the Brain

- Marijuana is now stronger and more harmful than it was in the 1960's and 1970's (THC levels are often 10 times higher).
- Even a small amount of the active ingredient, THC, changes the way your brain cells work. On the first inhale, harmful effects occur.
- THC and/or its metabolic by-products can stay in your body up to 30 days or longer after use, continuing to do damage.
- Using marijuana affects your ability to learn and remember things, and your motivation to do things.
- Using marijuana may lead to mental problems and illnesses, including paranoia, anxiety, panic attacks and depression.
- If a person has a serious mental illness, such as schizophrenia or depression, it can make that illness worse.
- Marijuana definitely can produce physical and psychological addiction.

*Brain Scan of a Non-Marijuana User Versus a Marijuana User*



## Smoking Marijuana, Like Smoking Tobacco, Can Be Hazardous to Your Health

- It is estimated that marijuana smoke produces **four times** the amount of carbon monoxide as does tobacco smoke.
- When marijuana is smoked, it produces over 2000 chemicals, some of which are poisonous, and can cause cancer, particularly of the head and neck (including the nose, lips, mouth, voice box, and nasal passages).
- With increased frequency of marijuana smoking, the risk of developing lung cancer is increased.
- Marijuana smoke can produce airway injury, acute and chronic bronchitis, lung inflammation and chronic cough.
- Cigarette smokers who also smoke marijuana have an even greater risk of developing respiratory and other diseases.

## Marijuana Use Affects School, Sports and Other Activities

- Using marijuana can affect schoolwork because it affects attention, memory, judgment, concentration and time perception.
- Using marijuana can affect performance when playing sports: timing, energy, depth perception, concentration and coordination are all affected.
- Marijuana decreases motivation in some people, and it affects such things as getting to school or work on time, doing a good job in an efficient, timely manner, etc., thus leading to trouble with school or employment.
- Because marijuana use affects thinking and judgment, users sometimes make mistakes that could embarrass or even hurt themselves or others.
- Also, because it affects judgment, perception and coordination, using tools or machinery is very dangerous when using marijuana and may lead to serious accidents.

## Marijuana Use Affects the Fetus During Pregnancy

- Smoking marijuana while pregnant can affect the fetus as well as the overall development of the child after birth.

*Marijuana "Bud"*



- Studies have shown, over the years of development, the following effects in children whose mothers used marijuana during pregnancy:

- These children had difficulty recalling information and paying attention.
- At age 10 they had higher rates of behavior disorders, attention problems and problems with learning that required complex mental skills.

## Marijuana Use Affects Driving

- Your ability to operate a car or ride a bike is negatively affected by marijuana use.
- Users often have difficulty with
  - judging distances
  - keeping position within a lane
  - steering ability
  - delayed responses to sights and sounds
- Using marijuana can decrease
  - alertness
  - concentration
  - coordination
  - the ability to react quickly
- These effects can last up to 24 hours after smoking marijuana.

