

# THE TRUTH ABOUT MARIJUANA

## Q & A

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.**

Q. Can people become addicted to marijuana?

**A. Yes. Research confirms you can become hooked on marijuana.**

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.**

## Info

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



## Get the Facts...

**Marijuana affects the brain.** THC (The active ingredient in marijuana) affects the never 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.

**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.

**Marijuana affects other aspects of your health.** Marijuana can limit your body's ability to fight off infection. Long-term marijuana use can even increase the risk of developing certain mental illnesses.

### **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.

### **Before You Risk It...**

**Know the law.** It is illegal to buy or sell marijuana. Even holding 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.

**Stay informed.** 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.

### **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:

- **Seems dizzy and having trouble walking**
- **Having red, bloodshot eyes and smelly hair and cloths**
- **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 Department of Counselling Services at 949-8789.**