

FAST FACTS on Marijuana

Let's Look at the Research



According to the **Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA)**, addiction rates among 12-17 year olds are among the highest levels nationally in states that have “medical” marijuana programs.¹

Marijuana and Addiction

Marijuana IS addictive! Let's consider the facts. Those who begin using marijuana in their teens have about a 1 in 6 chance of developing marijuana addiction. According to the National Institute on Drug Addiction (www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/marijuana), children and teens are 6 times more likely to be in treatment for marijuana than for all other illegal drugs combined.

Marijuana and Academic Achievement

Marijuana use is associated with poor school performance. The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (2010) conducted by the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration**, a federal agency, found that teens with an average grade of “D” or below were more than 4 times as likely to have used marijuana in the past year, than those with an average grade of “A”. The Monitoring the Future Survey, a large national survey of youth conducted by the **University of Michigan**, found that the more a student uses drugs, including marijuana, the lower their grades were, and the more likely they were to drop out of school.

Visit: www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/marijuana (**the National Institute of Drug Abuse**) to get the real facts about marijuana.

Marijuana and Teen Brain Development

Marijuana use negatively affects the developing teen brain. A study conducted by **Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and the National Institute on Mental Health** found that adolescents and young adults that are heavy marijuana users are more likely than non-users to have disrupted brain development. Researchers found abnormalities in areas of the brain that interconnect brain regions involved in memory, attention, decision-making, language and executive functioning skills.

Research based information about the dangers of marijuana can be found by visiting www.samhsa.gov.

A new large scale New Zealand study of brain development, funded in part by our federal government, found that individuals who use marijuana heavily during their teen years and continued in adult life showed a significant drop in IQ (an average of 8 points) on intelligence tests. This information is according to a major study published during September 2012 in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Visit: www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/marijuana (National Institute of Drug Abuse).

1: Effects of Medical Marijuana Legalization, CADCA www.cadca.org/policyadvocacy/priorities/marijuana

Marijuana is illegal, addictive and harmful to the body, especially developing brains.

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Marijuana and Mental Health

Marijuana use is associated with mental health problems. Research shows a connection between marijuana use, depression, anxiety, and psychosis.

Visit: www.drugabuse.gov/drugsabuse/marijuana (**National Institute of Drug Abuse**) for more information.

Drugged Driving

Marijuana use and driving is dangerous! According to the **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration**, “Data from traffic arrests and fatalities indicate that, after alcohol, marijuana is the most frequently detected psychoactive substance among driving populations.” Marijuana impairs motor skills in most drivers. Marijuana use decreases reaction times, distorts time and distance estimation, and reduces the ability to concentrate.

One in five (20%) high school students have driven under the influence of marijuana. This is higher than those that have driven under the influence of alcohol (13%), according to a study from the **Office of National Drug Control Policy**, Students against Destructive Decisions and Liberty Mutual Survey. This percentage has increased since 2003 when one in 6 students (16%) admitted to driving under the influence of marijuana.

Visit: www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2012/02/24/ (search “Importance Drugged Driving Prevention”) for additional facts.

Some of the Organizations That Oppose Marijuana Use

Responsible health organizations recognize that marijuana is dangerous to our kids! **The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)** opposes the legalization of marijuana. Marijuana, the illegal drug most commonly abused by adolescents, has the potential for significant negative effects. The Academy’s position is that any change in legal status of marijuana, even if limited to adults, could create increased use in teens.

Visit: www.aap.org for the full position statement of the academy.

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) has stated its concern about the negative impact of “medical” marijuana on youth. Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to the many negative developmental, cognitive, medical, psychiatric, and addictive effects of marijuana. Teen marijuana users are more likely than adult users to develop marijuana dependence, and their heavy use is associated with increased incidence of psychotic, mood, and anxiety disorders. In addition, marijuana’s negative effects on cognition and brain development during adolescence may have lasting results.

Visit: www.aacap.org to read the Academy’s full position statement.

The National Association of Drug Court Professionals signed a Position Statement on Marijuana highlighting research on the dangers of marijuana use (Board Positions 12/12).

Visit: www.nadcp.org/learn-7 to read the full statement.

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