

Marijuana

Imagine a life free of dependency on marijuana.

Excessive marijuana use poses surprising and **SERIOUS RISKS** to long-term health.

Marijuana is the most commonly used illegal drug in the United States. Also known as weed, pot, grass, and Mary Jane, marijuana consists of various parts of the hemp plant known as *Cannabis sativa*. Within the hemp plant is a mind-altering chemical known as THC. It can be smoked, inhaled with a vaporizer, or mixed into foods or liquids. Mostly used recreationally, marijuana is known to induce a relaxed state.

MEDICINAL BENEFITS

The scientific data for marijuana as a treatment for many medical conditions is ongoing. The use of marijuana for some health issues such as chronic pain, multiple sclerosis, and glaucoma is being studied. Consideration is also being given

to the use of Marijuana to treat many other disorders and diseases.

YOUTH AND MARIJUANA USE

Adolescents and young people who recreationally or habitually use marijuana increase their chances of long-term consequences. Because their brain is still developing, the risk factors are much higher. Teens who frequently use marijuana could suffer damage in brain functions, particularly with memory, thinking, and learning. The results may be long-term or even permanent.

Marijuana Effects

- **Short-term Effects** – altered senses, increased heart rate, impaired movement, mood changes, memory and problem-solving difficulties.
- **Long-term Effects** – depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, breathing problems, paranoia, and hallucinations. Heavy marijuana users report lower life satisfaction, poorer mental and physical health, more relationship problems, and less success in life and school.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

Addiction occurs in roughly 9% of all marijuana users, jumping to 17% in adolescents. Attempting to quit can produce withdrawal symptoms of irritability, difficult sleeping, anxiety, and decrease in appetite.

While there is currently no medication available to treat a marijuana addiction, there are multiple therapies available. Cognitive behavioral therapy can help

users increase their self-control, stop altogether, and address the problems caused by heavy drug use. Motivational enhancement therapy encourages users to create internally motivated changes to counter drug use.

ACTION STEPS

- ✓ **Seek help** – Be open with your doctor or counselor about your marijuana habits. They can help you personalize a plan for change.
- ✓ **Hydrate** – Be sure to drink plenty of water. Reduce your caffeine intake until any altered sleep patterns normalize.
- ✓ **Exercise** – Physical activity helps alleviate depressive symptoms and promotes good health. Exercise also aids your body's healing process.
- ✓ **Avoid triggers** – Places and people that encourage your marijuana use shouldn't be tolerated. Surround yourself with those who respect your choice to stop using.
- ✓ **Find support** – There are a variety of 12-step programs and support groups available to help you on your journey.

KEEP IN MIND

Marijuana addiction, along with any substance use issue, doesn't need to write your life story. Be courageous and seek help for a healthy, new start on life. There are ample resources available to live an addiction-free life.

What positive steps will you make today toward a marijuana-free future?