



Marijuana



Mari-what? What's that?

Marijuana (mar-i-wanna) is a powerful drug that comes from a plant...an Indian hemp plant to be exact, called cannabis sativa (can-nuh-bis sa-teev-a). In the past this plant has been used to make rope, paint, and cloth. Today, some people  **Smoke** or  **EAT** marijuana because there's a chemical in it that gets people "high." It's called (Are you ready for this?)

Delta 9-Tetrahydrocannabinol
(tetra-high-dro-can-nab-in-all)



....or **THC** for short. (Whew!!) — If that weren't enough, marijuana also contains 450 other chemicals!



In some cases, the THC from one marijuana cigarette can take up to one whole month to leave the body! (That's about 30 days, 720 hours, 43,200 minutes...)

FAST FACT:

Marijuana is 3 to 8 times more powerful today than in the '70's. But one thing hasn't changed, it's still

AGAINST THE LAW!



What does Marijuana look like and how is it used?

Marijuana (also known as “dope,” “pot,” “weed,” “maryjane,” “grass,” “reefer,” “killer weed,” “skunk,” “kind,” and “Buddha”) looks like this:



But the leaves and flowering buds are usually dried, so it may look like this when it is used:



It's sometimes smoked in a cigarette (“joint,” “reefer,” “stick,” “doobie,” “spliff”), cigar (“blunt,” “fatty,” “Philly”),



pipe (“bowl”),

or bong



or eaten (for example, in marijuana brownies).



What is that stuff called “Hash?”

Hash - (or hashish) is a hard, brown, sticky substance that's made from the dried flowers and sap (also called resin) of the marijuana plant. It contains more THC than the leaves ... so it's stronger than marijuana.

Hash can also be converted into an even more potent (powerful) substance called hash oil. Some people drop it on their tongues, smoke it in “joints” and “blunts,” or add it to other things they are eating.



Effects of Marijuana

Marijuana can act like a stimulant (increasing heart rate, for example), a depressant (causing users to eventually get sleepy), even a mild hallucinogen.

It's hard to explain, but marijuana can bring up deep feelings that range from mellow to anxious. Users may also get silly and giggly for no reason.



Marijuana affects everyone differently. The effects may be mild or strong, positive or negative, depending upon things like ...

- The amount of marijuana used
- The strength of the marijuana used
- Whether it is smoked or eaten
- What the user expects the drug to do
- The user's mood or "set" (how he or she is feeling that day)
- The setting (the place where the drug is used, including the other people who are also there)

People can become both physically and psychologically dependent on marijuana. If they smoke it regularly, they may, over time, need to take more to get the same effect.



Like all drugs sold on the street, marijuana may contain **ADDITIONAL** harmful substances. Drug dealers, for example, sometimes sprinkle on Heroin, PCP, or Ketamine to create a stronger effect. Unfortunately, this can also bring on **PANIC ATTACKS**.

More recently, some dealers have been soaking marijuana in embalming fluid (that's the stuff used to preserve dead bodies)! People who've smoked this combination have been known to suffer convulsions, seizures, coma, even death!!

More Effects of Marijuana

BRAIN — Affects moods and the ability to concentrate, learn, and remember.

EYES — Look red and bloodshot.

THROAT — Makes people thirsty.

HEART — Smoking pot can speed up the heart as much as 50%.

LUNGS — Increased risk of bronchitis or pneumonia.

STOMACH — Increased appetite. People get the “munchies” and possibly gain unintended weight.

HORMONES — Marijuana can affect growth and sexual development in both males and females.

IMMUNE SYSTEM — Smoking pot makes it harder to fight off respiratory diseases like colds, chronic coughs, bronchitis, and pneumonia.

WHOLE BODY — Poorer coordination and sense of balance. Also slower reaction time.



Marijuana and Unborn Babies

If a pregnant woman uses pot, she increases the risk of miscarriage and stillbirth. The baby could also be born smaller than normal, with nervous system problems, and/or learning disabilities.



Dangerous Combinations



Alcohol & Marijuana

When someone drinks too much alcohol, a toxic (that means poisonous!) compound called acetaldehyde (asset-AL-duh-hide) builds up in the bloodstream. When it reaches the brain, the brain sends a signal to the stomach to throw up. This is gross and disgusting, but throwing up the alcohol means that no more toxic compound gets in to damage the cells.

If a person smokes marijuana while drinking alcohol, the chemicals in marijuana stop the brain from sending the signal to throw up. The result is higher & higher levels of acetaldehyde in the bloodstream to the point that the person passes out, falls into a coma, and perhaps even dies.

Throwing up, however, isn't always the answer either. When people pass out after drinking too much alcohol, the food and liquid that comes up from their stomach can go down the windpipe and enter the lungs instead. This can result in difficulty breathing, pneumonia, even death !!

!!
ww



Everyone knows you shouldn't drink alcohol and drive, but is it okay for people to smoke marijuana and drive?

NO WAY!

Marijuana slows thinking and reflexes, and the effects last even after the "high" disappears. This means:

- It's harder to focus on moving objects.
- It's harder to see brief flashes of light.
- It's harder to stay in the proper lane.
- It's harder to judge the exact distance between cars.
- It takes longer to react to emergencies, or to **ANY** unexpected change or situation, for that matter.
- Because marijuana makes users focus intently, it becomes harder to pay attention to **OTHER** important details, like oncoming cars or children playing in the road.



A person should never drive after using **ANY** drug!

? Q & A With Dr. DQ ?



Dear Dr. DQ,
I've been told marijuana's
no big deal, that it's just a simple
weed. Is that true?

Signed,
Questioning

Dear Questioning,

NO! Marijuana is a mix of more than 450 different substances, some of which can take from 7 to 30 days to leave the body. Nothing that stays so long or has so many different parts can be called "simple." But that's not the whole story. Marijuana is also complicated because it can act like 3 different categories of drugs: stimulants, depressants, and even mild hallucinogens.

Signed, Dr. DQ



Dear Dr. DQ,
Does marijuana have
any approved medical uses?
Signed,
Curious

Dear Curious,

The THC in marijuana helps relieve (that means decrease) the nausea people undergoing cancer chemotherapy can suffer. As a result, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved use of a SYNTHETIC version of THC called dronabinol (Trade name: Marinol).

Using the plant itself, however, is another matter. Scientists continue studying 1) possible uses of marijuana for specific medical conditions, and 2) safer ways of taking it. To date, several states even permit people to grow and use marijuana if recommended by a physician for a specific medical condition. But, as of now, using the actual plant is still **ILLEGAL** for **ANY** reason according to U.S. Federal law.

Signed, Dr. DQ

continued...

Questions continued...



Dear Dr. DQ,
Some of my friends have started to use marijuana and want me to try it. They say it's no big deal...that it's harmless and that many of our parents tried it when they were younger. So, what's the problem?
Signed,
Confused

Dear Confused,

There are **MANY** problems. Using marijuana can make you mess up in school, sports, clubs, or with your friends. THC affects the brain. (It also is absorbed and stored in fatty tissues... including the heart, brain, and reproductive organs.) People who use it can have problems learning, remembering, thinking, and solving problems. They can lose coordination and may feel anxious and experience panic attacks. They may become dependent on the drug. When marijuana has been mixed with other drugs, the risks of problems are even greater.

Signed, Dr. DQ



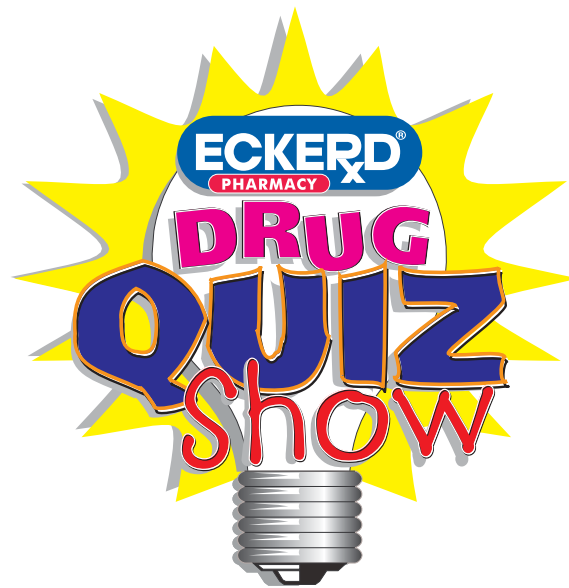
Dear Dr. DQ,
Some people my parents' age say that today's marijuana is the same as it was when they were teenagers. Is that true?
Signed,
Not Sure

Dear Not Sure,

That's **FALSE!** Marijuana in the '60's and '70's contained much less of the mood-altering chemical THC, about 1% to 2%. The marijuana of today is much stronger, having 5% to 16% THC. This means that the effects of today's marijuana are much greater, with serious risk of damage to the brain and reproductive organs, and increased risk of developing chemical dependency.



Signed, Dr. DQ



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