

# TIPS for TEENS

## MARIJUANA



### THE TRUTH ABOUT MARIJUANA

**SLANG:** WEED/POT/GRASS/ REEFER/  
GANJA/MARY JANE/BLUNT/JOINT/TREES

## GET THE FACTS

**MARIJUANA AFFECTS YOUR BRAIN.** Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the chemical responsible for most of marijuana's psychological effects, affects brain cells throughout the brain, including cells in circuits related to learning and memory, coordination, and addiction.<sup>1</sup>

**MARIJUANA AFFECTS YOUR SELF-CONTROL.** Marijuana can seriously affect your sense of time and your coordination, impacting things like driving.

**MARIJUANA AFFECTS YOUR LUNGS.** Marijuana smoke deposits four times more tar in the lungs and contains 50 percent to 70 percent more cancer-causing substances than tobacco smoke does.<sup>2</sup>

**MARIJUANA USE IS NEGATIVELY LINKED WITH OTHER ASPECTS OF YOUR HEALTH.** Chronic marijuana use has been linked with depression, anxiety, and an increased risk of schizophrenia in some cases.<sup>3</sup>

**MARIJUANA IS NOT ALWAYS WHAT IT SEEMS.** Marijuana can be laced with substances without your knowledge.<sup>4</sup> "Blunts"—hollowed-out cigars filled with marijuana—sometimes contain crack cocaine.

**MARIJUANA CAN BE ADDICTIVE.** Not everyone who uses marijuana becomes addicted, but some users develop signs of dependence.

## ? Q&A

**Q. ISN'T SMOKING MARIJUANA LESS DANGEROUS THAN SMOKING CIGARETTES?**

**A. NO.** Both marijuana and cigarette smoke can be harmful. More research is needed to fully understand the connection between marijuana and long-term effects such as cancer.<sup>5</sup>

**Q. CAN PEOPLE BECOME ADDICTED TO MARIJUANA?**

**A. YES.** Marijuana use can lead to a marijuana use disorder, which takes the form of addiction in severe cases.<sup>6</sup>

**Q. WHAT ARE THE OTHER RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH MARIJUANA USE?**

**A.** In addition to the physical and mental risks associated with marijuana use, people who use marijuana have also reported less academic and career success, as well as lower life satisfaction and more relationship problems.<sup>7</sup>

### THE BOTTOM LINE:

Marijuana affects the development of teen brains. Talk to your parents, a doctor, a counselor, a teacher, or another adult you trust if you have questions.

### LEARN MORE:

Get the latest information on how drugs affect the brain and body at [teens.drugabuse.gov](https://teens.drugabuse.gov).

### TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MARIJUANA, CONTACT: SAMHSA

1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)  
(English and Español)

TTY 1-800-487-4889

[www.samhsa.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov)  
[store.samhsa.gov](https://store.samhsa.gov)



**SAMHSA**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration



# BEFORE YOU RISK IT!

- 1 KNOW THE LAW.** Marijuana is a Schedule I drug.<sup>8</sup> According to federal law, it is illegal to buy or sell marijuana.
- 2 GET THE FACTS.** Using marijuana can cause memory problems and mood changes, and long-term use may lower intelligence.<sup>9,10</sup>
- 3 STAY INFORMED.** Research suggest that teens usually try alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana before other drugs, though most people who use marijuana do not use other drugs.<sup>11</sup>
- 4 KNOW THE RISKS.** Marijuana affects your coordination and reaction time, raising your risk of injury or death from car crashes and other accidents. Co-use of alcohol or other drugs heightens crash risks.<sup>12</sup>
- 5 LOOK AROUND YOU.** Most teens aren't smoking marijuana. In fact, only 6.5 percent of youth ages 12 to 17 said that they had smoked marijuana in the past month.<sup>13</sup>



## MORE INFORMATION

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR FOR RESOURCES USED IN THIS

# "TIPS for TEENS,"

visit [store.samhsa.gov](http://store.samhsa.gov) or call  
1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)  
(English and Español).

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# KNOW THE SIGNS

How can you tell if a friend is using marijuana? Symptoms of marijuana use may include:<sup>14</sup>

- **Poor physical coordination**
- **Red eyes**
- **Unusual smell on clothing**
- **Problems with short-term memory**
- **Anxiety**



## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP SOMEONE WHO IS USING MARIJUANA?

### BE A FRIEND. SAVE A LIFE.

Encourage your friend to stop using or seek help from a parent, teacher, or other caring adult.

For 24/7 free and confidential information and treatment referrals in English and Español, call SAMHSA's National Helpline at:

1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)  
or visit the SAMHSA Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator at:  
[findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov)

<sup>1,2,3,5,12</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018). Research Reports: Marijuana. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana/letter-director>

<sup>4</sup> Gilbert, C. R., Baram, M., & Cavarocchi, N. C. (2013). Smoking wet: Respiratory failure related to smoking tainted marijuana cigarettes. *Texas Heart Institute Journal*, 40(1): 64-67.

<sup>6</sup> Medical News Today. (2017). Marijuana 'may be worse than cigarettes for cardiovascular health'. Retrieved from <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/318854.php>

<sup>7</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018). Marijuana. *Drug Facts*. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana>

<sup>8</sup> Drug Enforcement Administration. (2018). Drug Scheduling. Retrieved from <https://www.dea.gov/druginfo/ds.shtml>

<sup>9</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2017). Marijuana and Public Health. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/marijuana/health-effects.html>

<sup>10</sup> Meier, M. H., Caspi, A., Ambler, A., Harrington, H., Houts, R., Keefe, R. S. E., McDonald, K., Ward, A., Poulton, R., & Moffitt, T. E. (2012). Persistent cannabis users show neuropsychological decline from childhood to midlife. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 109(40), E2657-E2664. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3479587/>

<sup>11</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2015). Marijuana: Facts for Teens. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/marijuana-facts-teens/want-to-know-more-some-faqs-about-marijuana>

<sup>13</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2018). *Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health* (HHS Publication No. SMA 18-5068, NSDUH Series H-53). Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/cbhsq-reports/NSDUHFFR2017/NSDUHFFR2017.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> American Addiction Centers. (2018). What Are the Signs That Someone Is High? Retrieved from <https://americanaddictioncenters.org/marijuana-rehab/how-to-tell-if-someone-is-high/>