

Marijuana

Marijuana is a mixture of dried, shredded leaves, stems, seeds and flowers of the Cannabis sativa or indica plant.

How is it used?

Marijuana is often smoked in hand-rolled cigarettes (joints), cigars (blunts), pipes or water pipes (bongs). Marijuana can also be brewed into drinks or infused in food (edibles). Extracts, or concentrated oils from the marijuana plant can be smoked from vaporizers and e-cigarettes.

What's in it?

There are more than 500 chemicals in marijuana, but the main psychoactive ingredient is THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol) which is responsible for the intoxicating effects. THC concentrations are much higher today than in the past and can vary widely from plant to plant. Marijuana extracts have THC concentrations more than 4 times greater than the regular buds of the plant. Marijuana edibles often contain large doses of THC in small servings, making it easy to eat more than intended. Consuming larger amounts of THC can lead to greater health risks.

What are the effects?

When inhaled, marijuana's effects begin almost immediately and can last from 1 to 3 hours. Decision making, concentration, and memory can be affected for days after use, especially in regular users. When marijuana is consumed in edibles, the effects of THC appear later (usually in 30 minutes to 1 hour) and may last for several hours. THC can be detected in the body for up to 7 days in occasional users and up to one month in regular users.

Physical effects of using marijuana include dry mouth and throat, bloodshot eyes, increased heart rate, and breathing problems. Long term use in smokers can result in permanent damage of lung tissue. Psychological effects include intensified perception of colors and sounds, altered sense of time, poor coordination, hallucinations, and increased risk of psychosis. Withdrawal symptoms include irritability, difficulty sleeping, loss of appetite and anxiety.

Is marijuana addictive?

Approximately 10 percent of all marijuana users develop a marijuana use disorder. Those who begin using marijuana before the age of 18 are 4–7 times more likely than adults to develop a marijuana use disorder.

Because the teen brain is still developing, marijuana can physically alter its structure and function faster and more intensely than in adults, interfering with brain development and heightening the risk of addiction.

Sources: Monitoring the Future Survey, National Institute on Drug Abuse, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, SAMHSA



Marijuana is also referred to as weed, pot, grass, reefer, Mary Jane, ganga, chronic, green, skunk and bud, among others.



Marijuana extracts are also called hash oil, dabs, shatter, wax and budder.



6% of teens who use e-cigarettes use them to smoke marijuana.

Trends & Statistics

Marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug in the United States.

45% of 12th graders in the U.S. have tried marijuana.

In 2017, 29% of 12th graders in the U.S. viewed regular use of marijuana as harmful, compared to 58% 20 years ago.

40% of 12th graders who report marijuana use in states with legal medical marijuana have consumed it in edible form, compared to 26% in non-medical marijuana states.

Marijuana sends more 12-24 year olds to the ER than any other illicit drug. Common reasons include anxiety, confusion, panic attacks and hallucinations.

Primary marijuana use disorders account for 77% of admissions to treatment centers for ages 12-17.