

## *What You Need to Know*

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Marijuana is a plant that has green and brown parts. These parts, mostly buds, are dried and shredded. People can smoke marijuana by rolling it into papers (joints), using pipes, or water pipes (bongs). When someone smokes marijuana, a chemical called THC goes into their body and affects their brain and other organs. Marijuana is the most commonly used illegal drug (Federally) in the United States; however, Michigan has legalized adult-use of marijuana, making it legal for adult use in Michigan. Marijuana's use and strength have increased in the past few years.

### **What is Medical Marijuana?**

Medical marijuana uses the marijuana plant or chemicals in it to treat diseases or conditions. In the state of Michigan, medical marijuana was legalized in 2008. Learn more about the Michigan Medical Marijuana Program.

### **What are the street names for marijuana?**

Pot, Weed, Ganja, Loud, Dope, Grass, Reefer, Mary Jane, Joint, Blunt and 420

### **What are the health risks of marijuana use?**

- Distorted perceptions Impaired coordination
- Difficulty thinking and problem-solving Problems with learning and memory
- Respiratory conditions (examples include bronchitis, emphysema, and bronchial asthma)
- Anxiety, depression, and schizophrenia Increased heart rate
- Hallucinations, delusions, and/or psychosis (when taken in high doses)

### **Signs of Marijuana Use**

Signs of marijuana use include:

- Dizziness
- Red, bloodshot eyes Difficulty walking
- Having difficulty remembering things that just happened Acting silly for no apparent reason
- The smell of marijuana on hair and clothes

### **What are the withdrawal symptoms of marijuana?**

- Irritability
- Sleeplessness
- Decreased appetite
- Anxiety

### **Is marijuana safe?**

Marijuana can be laced with substances such as fentanyl, PCP, formaldehyde, or codeine cough syrup without your knowledge. "Blunts" hollowed-out cigars filled with marijuana sometimes have crack cocaine added. These added substances can increase the harm caused by using marijuana.

## **Is it possible for someone to become addicted to marijuana?**

Approximately 3 in 10 people who use marijuana have marijuana use disorder. For people who begin using marijuana before age 18, the risk of developing marijuana use disorder is even greater. (CDC)

## **How do I know if I am addicted to marijuana?**

Some of the signs that someone might be addicted to marijuana include:

- Trying but failing to quit using marijuana.
- Giving up important activities with friends and family in favor of using marijuana.
- Using marijuana even when it is known that it causes problems at home, school, or work.

Compared to marijuana users who are not addicted, people who are addicted to marijuana are at a higher risk of the negative consequences of using the drug, such as problems with attention, memory, and learning. For more information visit Center for Disease Control (CDC)'s website information on addiction or the National Institute on Drug Abuse's pages on addiction science.

## **Is it possible to overdose or have a bad reaction to marijuana?**

A fatal overdose is unlikely, but that doesn't mean marijuana is harmless. The signs of using too much marijuana are similar to the usual effects of using marijuana, but more severe. These signs may include extreme confusion, anxiety, paranoia, panic, fast heart rate, delusions or hallucinations, increased blood pressure, and severe nausea or vomiting. In some cases, these reactions can lead to accidental injuries such as a motor vehicle crash, fall, or poisoning. Synthetic marijuana use increases the chance of fentanyl consumption that can be fatal.

## **What are the effects of mixing marijuana with alcohol, tobacco, or prescription drugs?**

Using alcohol and marijuana at the same time is likely to result in greater impairment than when using either one alone. Using marijuana and tobacco at the same time may also lead to increased exposure to harmful chemicals, causing greater risks to the lungs, and the cardiovascular system. Also, be aware that marijuana may change how prescription drugs work. Always talk with your doctor about any medications you are taking, or thinking about taking, and possible side effects when mixed with other things like marijuana.

## **How does marijuana affect driving?**

Marijuana significantly impairs judgment, motor coordination, and reaction time. Studies have found a direct relationship between blood THC concentration and impaired driving ability. If using medical or adult-use marijuana:

- Choose not to drive and remind your friends and family to do the same.
- Assign a trusted, sober driver when you are going out with a group of people you know.
- Use a rideshare service or call a taxi.

## **How does marijuana affect the developing brain (25 years and under)?**

Marijuana use during adolescence and young adulthood may harm the developing brain. Negative effects of marijuana use during this period can include:

- Difficulty thinking and problem-solving
- Problems with memory and learning
- Reduced coordination
- Difficulty maintaining attention
- Problems with school and social life

## How does marijuana impact pregnancy?

Marijuana use during pregnancy can be harmful to the baby's health. The chemicals in marijuana (in particular, tetrahydrocannabinol or THC) pass through the system to the baby and may harm the baby's development. Although more research is needed to better understand how marijuana may affect you and your baby during pregnancy, it is recommended that pregnant persons do not use marijuana.

## How does marijuana impact breastfeeding?

The health effects of a breastfeeding person's use of marijuana on their infant or baby are not yet fully known. We do know that chemicals from marijuana can be passed to a baby through breast milk. THC is stored in body fat and is slowly released over time, meaning a baby could still be exposed even after a person has stopped using marijuana. Persons who are breastfeeding are encouraged to avoid all marijuana use.

## How should marijuana be stored?

Keep products in the original, childproof containers and out of the reach of children. Always store in a lockbox.

Children, adults, and pets can mistake marijuana products, particularly edibles, for regular food or candy. Consuming marijuana can make children and pets very sick. They may have problems walking or sitting up or may have a hard time breathing. Since marijuana use has been legalized in some states, accidental marijuana poisonings in children have increased, sometimes requiring visits to the emergency room or hospitalization.

## How is eating and drinking foods that contain marijuana (edibles) different from smoking marijuana?

Because marijuana contains tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), there are health risks associated with using marijuana regardless of how it is used. Some of these negative effects include having difficulty thinking and problem-solving, having problems with memory, learning and maintaining attention, and demonstrating impaired coordination. Additionally, frequent use can lead to becoming addicted to marijuana. However, some risks may differ by the way it is used. Smoke from marijuana contains many of the same toxins, irritants, and carcinogens as tobacco smoke and can lead to a greater risk of bronchitis, cough, and phlegm production. Whereas edibles, which take longer to digest, take longer to produce an effect. Therefore, people may consume more to feel the effects faster. This may lead to people consuming very high doses and result in negative effects like anxiety, paranoia and, in rare cases, an extreme psychotic reaction (e.g., delusions, hallucinations, talking incoherently, and agitation) which can last for an extended period of time.

## Does marijuana use lead to other drug use?

Most people who use marijuana do not go on to use other, harder substances. More research is needed to understand if marijuana is a gateway drug. "Gateway drugs" are a drugs that are thought to encourage the use of more dangerous drugs (such as cocaine or heroin).

## Can secondhand marijuana smoke affect nonsmokers, including children?

Secondhand marijuana smoke contains tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the chemical responsible for most of marijuana's psychological effects, and many of the same toxic chemicals in smoked tobacco.

Smoked marijuana has many of the same cancer-causing substances as smoked tobacco, but there are still many unanswered questions around secondhand marijuana smoke exposure and its impact on chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and lung diseases.

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