



Session 10: Marijuana



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Center for Substance Abuse Treatment
www.samhsa.gov

The Importance of Total Abstinence

- Abstinence from all substances that affect the brain—even alcohol and marijuana—greatly increases the chances of a successful recovery.

Is Marijuana Harmless?

- Marijuana is the most widely used illegal drug.
- More young people go into treatment for marijuana use than for all other illegal drug use combined.
- Marijuana use affects nearly every organ system in the body. It can have a profound impact on people's education, employment, and personal life.

Marijuana Prevalence

- 2 out of 5 Americans have tried marijuana.
- 1 in 10 has used marijuana in the last year.

What Is Marijuana?

- Marijuana is a greenish gray mixture of dried parts of the *Cannabis sativa* plant.
- It is usually smoked.

Street Names

- Pot, weed, bud, herb, ganja, hash, grass, and chronic
- Marijuana cigarettes = joints
- Pipes = bong
- Marijuana cigars = blunts

History

- Marijuana is a controlled substance, like heroin and LSD.
- Marijuana (except for medical use) has been illegal in the United States since 1937.

Medical Marijuana

- Marijuana has been used to treat
 - Loss of vision from glaucoma
 - Nausea that can come with AIDS and cancer treatments
 - The pain of multiple sclerosis
- Marinol is a prescription medicine that contains marijuana's active ingredient.
- Marinol is used to treat nausea and vomiting.

Active Ingredient

- Today's marijuana has 3 times as much THC (the active ingredient) as marijuana of 20 years ago, making it more potent.

Short-Term Effects

While high

- Relaxed, euphoric feelings
- Increased heart rate
- Poor balance and coordination
- Slow reaction time
- Disorientation
- Panic

After high fades

- Sleepiness
- Depression
- Distrust

Long-Term Effects

- Marijuana can impair learning and memory.
- Lower grades and poor work performance can result.

Cancer Risks

- Puff for puff, smoking marijuana is more dangerous than smoking cigarettes.
- Marijuana is linked to head and neck cancer.

Risk of Infection and Disease

- THC makes it harder for the body to fight infection and disease.

Marijuana and Driving

- Marijuana is a factor in many fatal car crashes.
- Driving ability is impaired for hours even after the high fades.

Marijuana and Pregnancy

Using marijuana during pregnancy can cause

- Low birth weight
- Problems with fetal brain and nerve development

Marijuana Addiction

- People who keep using marijuana even though it hurts their family and work may be addicted.
- Withdrawal can include
 - Cravings
 - Anxiety
 - Anger
 - Trouble sleeping

Marijuana and Other Drugs

- Marijuana use is linked with heavy drinking and use of other drugs.

Marijuana and Relapse

- People who use marijuana have relapse rates to stimulants 2 to 3 times higher than people who abstain from marijuana.

Marijuana and Families

- People may use marijuana as a way to avoid coping with important family problems.