

Marijuana

STREET NAMES: Pot, Green Bud, Dope, Reefer, Grass, Weed, Acapulco Gold, Joint, Doobie, Skunk Weed, Ganjas, and Bhang.

WHAT IS IT?

A plant called cannabis which has been used for both its medicinal and drug effects for at least 4000 years. It has been used to make rope, cloth, and paint. Although marijuana is thought to be a harmless substance among some people, it actually contains over 360 chemicals besides THC and its smoke contains toxic vapors of carbon monoxide, acetaldehyde and phenol. Marijuana smoke contains twice as many cancer-producing substances as tobacco cigarettes and affects the nervous system. Marijuana can remain in the body, stored in the fatty tissues, for up to 3 months and can be detected by urinalysis during this time.

WHAT CAN HAPPEN TO YOUR BODY?

AT FIRST:

- Feel calm, relaxed, sleepy.
- Heart beats faster.
- Reaction time slows down.
- Throat, mouth and lips get dry.
- Eyes get bloodshot. Eyesight blurs.
- Lose sense of time.
- Excessive eating.
- Feelings of anxiety, uneasy, restless.
- Short-term memory loss and impaired thinking.

OVER TIME:

- Lung damage.
- Lung cancer.
- Can't remember things.
- Persistent cloudy thinking.
- Continued memory loss.
- Low motivation.
- Lower ability to fight off colds and flu.
- Lower sperm count and movement.
- Disrupts menstrual periods and ovulation.

MEDICAL USES:

Marijuana's medical statutes remain the center of a heated national debate, despite 1996 approval by voters in CA and AZ for legalized medical use. Although marijuana has no officially-accepted medical use, it has been used for centuries to treat a variety of

problems. Currently, it's used by sufferers of glaucoma to reduce pressure within the eye, by cancer patients to reduce vomiting from chemotherapy, and by people with AIDS to combat the appetite and severe weight loss associated with the disease.

DURATION:

1-4 hours after the last use, although mild effects may linger for several more hours depending whether it is smoked or eaten.

TRENDS:

Marijuana use has dramatically increased in recent years following a decade where its use had decreased dramatically.

DEMOGRAPHICS:

Although use extends across all demographic groups, its concentrated among the young. About 70 million Americans have tried pot, with 2.2 million trying it for the first time last year. About ten million Americans smoke pot on a regular basis.

Marijuana is called a "gateway drug" because surveys show that people using drugs other than marijuana usually started by smoking pot. There are special risks involved in using marijuana along with other drugs. Alcohol and marijuana taken in combination more seriously impair motor coordination, perception, and judgment than if either drug is taken alone.