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Rising Above Addiction

Its Not “Just Weed” Anymore



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What is Marijuana

- **Most popular illicit psychoactive drug**
- **Magnifies existing personality traits**
- **Effects depend on the mind-set of the user**



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Effects of Marijuana

- **Relaxation**
- **Sedation**
- **Increased Appetite**
- **Heightened sense of novelty**
- **Giddiness**



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Effects of Marijuana

- **Bloodshot eyes**
- **Short-term memory impairment**
- **Impaired tracking ability**
- **Mental confusion**
- **Decreased sperm count**
- **Weight gain (munchies)**



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Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)

- **The psychoactive chemical in marijuana**
- **The average concentration of THC has increased from 1 – 3 % in the 1960's and 1970's to 15 – 25 % today.**



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Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) Continued

- **This means there is 5-8 times more THC in today's cannabis**
- **Most research is based on this “weaker” form of marijuana (so there is a lot we don't know)**



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What We Know

- **Brain cells react to the over stimulation THC produces by retracting into the cell membrane and becoming inactive**
- **Long term use results in everything becoming boring**
- **To avoid this, one must continue to use or stay clean for four to six weeks or longer**



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What We know

- **When THC is taken into the body, it severely limits the available amount of short-term memory**
- **Marijuana slows learning and disrupts concentration by its influence on short-term memory**



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What We Know

- **Alcohol and other drugs (AOD) effect the younger brain (12-25) more severely than the adult brain.**
- **At the age of 12 there is an explosion in the number of connections and synapses among the nerve cells in the frontal lobe.**
- **From age 12 – 25 there is a gradual pruning process as these connections are strengthened or weakened (efficiency)**
- **So, excess AOD use can cause distorted thinking**



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What We Know

- **Therefore, the ability to focus on things that are important and ignore things that are not is reduced over time**



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Long-Term Effects

- **Respiratory problems**
- **Smoking on a regular basis leads to symptoms of increased coughing with acute and chronic bronchitis**
- **75% of marijuana users also smoke cigarettes**



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Long-Term Effects

Immune System

- **Marijuana has been identified as a co-factor in the progression of HIV infection**
- **THC can lead to enhanced growth of tumors due to suppression of the anti-tumor immune response, including Breast Cancer**



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Long-Term Effects

Acute Mental Effects

- **There is still much debate about whether marijuana will cause a psychosis or serious mental illness rather than just increasing paranoia, acute anxiety, or depression**
- **Often the use of marijuana (particularly that with high levels of THC) will tip the mental balance of someone “just holding on”**



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Tolerance

- **Marijuana persists in the body of a chronic user for up to 3 months**
- **These residual amounts in the body can disrupt some physiological, mental, and emotional functions**
- **Tolerance increases with use**



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Withdrawal

- **Anger**
- **Aches**
- **Depression**
- **Inability to concentrate**
- **Slight tremors**
- **Sleep disturbance**
- **Anxiety**



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Can you Overdose?

- **There are fewer receptors in the brainstem for cannabis when compared to receptors for opiates, cocaine, and alcohol. The brainstem controls heart rate and respiration. This is why dangerous overdoses can occur with opiates, cocaine and alcohol and why it is so difficult to physically overdose with marijuana**



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Is it a Gateway Drug?

- **The short answer is...Yes, it can be.**

How and Why?

- **Environmental (social circle)**
- **Genetic aspect of addiction (Family History)**



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1 800 DRUG HELP

Residential Treatment

- ***Phoenix House Academy of Dallas***

2345 Reagan Street Dallas, TX 75219

Phone: 214 999 1044

- ***Phoenix House Academy of Austin***

400 West Live Oak Street Austin, TX 78704

Phone: 512 440 0613

Outpatient Treatment

- ***Phoenix House***

501 Garden Oaks Boulevard Houston, TX 77018

Phone: 713 426 2637



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Speaker:

Steven Thomason, LMSW, LCDC
Regional Clinical Director, Phoenix
Houses of Texas

1-800-DRUG-HELP



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