

Marijuana Fast Facts

FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

Marijuana Harmless? Think Again

MarijuanaHarmlessThinkAgain.org

Increased Safety Costs

- Marijuana is the most prevalent illegal drug detected in impaired drivers, fatally injured drivers, and motor vehicle crash victims.¹
- Marijuana impairs motor coordination and reaction time and is the second most prevalent drug (after alcohol) implicated in automobile accidents.²
- In the five years following the establishment of the California Medical Marijuana Program (Jan. 2004), there were 1,240 fatalities in fatal car crashes involving marijuana, compared to 631 for the five years prior, for an increase of almost 100%.³
- In 2008 there were 8 counties where more than 16% of the drivers in fatal car crashes tested positive for marijuana. Five of the 8 counties had rates over 20%.
- More people are driving on weekend nights under the influence of marijuana (8.3%) than alcohol (2.2%).⁴
- In the first six months that marijuana became legal in the state of Washington:
 - 745 drivers stopped by police tested positive for the drug's psychoactive ingredient, THC, in their blood.
 - Over half of those were over the state's new legal limit of 5 nanograms of THC per milliliter of blood.
 - By contrast, in each of the last two full years, about 1,000 drivers who were pulled over tested positive for THC. The increase comes despite the fact that recreational-use pot stores will not open in Washington State until next year.⁵

Increase in Crime

When medical marijuana was approved in California, the Los Angeles Police Dept. reported that areas surrounding cannabis clubs had a significant increase in robberies, burglaries, aggravated assaults and auto burglaries near dispensaries.

Legalization would not ease the burden on law enforcement. According to ASAM, "Nationally, there are an estimated 2.7 million alcohol-related arrests each year compared to 750,000 annual marijuana possession arrests. If marijuana use increased, as can be expected under legalization, it is likely that there would be an increase in the number of arrests at the state level for marijuana-related incidents such as public use violations, violations in laws regulating age limits, and marijuana-related arrests for driving under the influence (DUI)."⁷

¹ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Drug Involvement of Fatally Injured Drivers, November 2010. U.S. Department of Transportation Report No. DOT HS 811 415 www.nhtsa.gov

² National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA), Drugged Driving: A White Paper, 2011, www.stopdruggeddriving.org

³ Alfred Crancer and Alan Crancer, The Involvement of Marijuana in California Fatal Motor Vehicle Crashes - 1998-2008. (2011)

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Couper, F., Data from the Washington State Toxicologist Shows Marijuana Prevalence Among Impaired Drivers. November 2013. www.stopdruggeddriving.org/news.html

⁶ Healthy and Drug Free Colorado, Organized Crime, Violence, and Drug Use Go Hand-in-Hand <http://www.healthdrugfreecolorado.org/default.aspx/Menu/Item/170/MenuSubID/14/MenuGroup/Home.htm>

⁷ American Society of Addiction Medicine, White Paper on State-Level Proposals to Legalize Marijuana, December 2012. <http://www.asam.org>

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Marijuana Fast Facts

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Most Arizonans stay away from marijuana

- Most Arizona adults and youth stay away from marijuana. Over 85% of Arizona youth in grades 8, 10, and 12 report no use of marijuana in the last 30 days.¹

Legalization of marijuana in other states has led to increased negative consequences

- Following legalization of recreation marijuana use in Colorado, current users increased from 18.7% to 27.3% for the 18 to 25 year-old group.²
- Since "medical marijuana" was legalized in California, the Los Angeles Police have reported a 52% rise in burglaries and a 57% increase in assaults. Police in Denver, Colorado report a 75% rise in burglaries since legalization.²

Marijuana use is strongly associated with impaired driver crashes

- Marijuana is the most common illegal drug detected in impaired drivers, fatally injured drivers, and motor vehicle crash victims.⁴

Marijuana use affects futures

- Heavy marijuana abusers self-report that their use had negative effects on their cognitive abilities, career status, social life, and physical and mental health.⁵
- A National Institute on Drug Abuse study found that youth who start marijuana use by age 13 usually do not go to college, while those abstaining from marijuana use, on average, complete almost three years of college. In addition, those who begin using marijuana by age 13 are more likely to report lower income and lower levels of schooling by age 29.
- Marijuana use is linked with dropping out of school, unemployment, and social welfare dependence.⁶

Users can become addicted to marijuana

- According to the National Admissions to Substance Abuse Treatment Services (SAMHSA), each year, more teens enter treatment with a primary diagnosis of marijuana dependence than for all other illicit drugs combined.
- In Missouri, 8800 individuals entering publicly supported drug treatment in 2012 reported marijuana as their primary addiction.⁷

As young people's perceived risk of marijuana decreases with public discussion over legalization, youth marijuana use increases

- Marijuana use is associated with increased depression, suicidal ideation, use of other substances and risky behavior among adolescents.⁸
- Youth who first smoke marijuana under the age of 14 are more than five times as likely to abuse drugs as adults.⁹
- Marijuana use effects are much more detrimental and long-lasting among youth, disrupting the brain function critical to motivation, memory, learning, judgment, and behavior control.¹⁰

1 2012 Arizona Youth Survey, Arizona Criminal Justice Commission

2 Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area, the Legalization of Marijuana, 2013

4 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

5 Attributes of Long-Term Heavy Cannabis Users, 2003

6 Cannabis Use and Later Life Outcomes, 2008

7 2013 Missouri Status Report on Missouri's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Problems, MO Department of Mental Health

8 American Psychiatric Association, 2013

9 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, NSDUH 2011

10 National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2010

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Youth

FAST FACTS on Marijuana Risks

TODAY'S Marijuana is a Powerful Drug

THC is the mind-altering chemical found in marijuana. The amount of THC matters. In the 1970's, THC potency was about 3%. The marijuana of today is far more powerful. Today's marijuana plants contain about 14% THC. Oil extracted from the plant has 60% or more THC.¹ This oil is a highly potent form of the drug and is used in vaporizer-type pens or in food products.²

A Look Into The Future

Drop in Intelligence

A major study proves marijuana is harmful to the developing brain. Young, frequent users were found to have an 8 point IQ drop.⁹



Yes – It is Addictive

17%

Seventeen percent of youth who started using marijuana in their teens will become dependent upon it.

25-50%

Those who use marijuana daily are 25 to 50% more likely to become dependent/addicted.¹⁰

It Changes How You Think and Act

The drug alters the way the brain works. It changes how you think and act. The THC in the drug impairs short-term memory, attention, judgment, cognitive functions, coordination and balance. It increases heart rate by 20-100%. These effects can last up to 24 hours after use.³

Why It Matters to You

Increased Problems in School, with Family and Friends

Lower Grades: Students who smoke marijuana tend to get lower grades.⁴

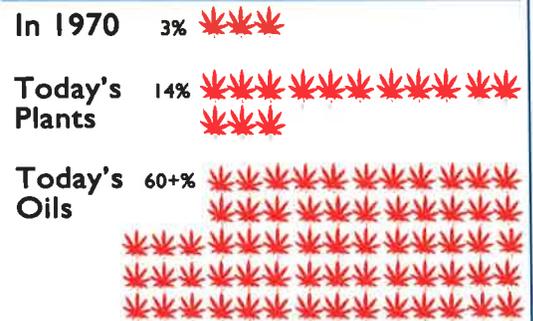
Drop Out Rates: Students who use marijuana before the age 15 are three times more likely to have left school by age 16.⁴

Poor Judgment: Marijuana use changes one's sense of judgment, which can lead to risky behaviors.⁵

Accidents: Marijuana affects a person's sense of time and coordination, raising the risk of injury or death from all types of accidents including car crashes.⁵

Does it Lead to Other Drugs?: Studies show youth who start using marijuana early are more likely to use other illegal drugs.⁶

THC Levels and Increased Potency



Increase in First-Use Psychosis

The increased potency of TODAY's marijuana is also increasing the chance of psychotic episodes, even on first-use.

What is psychosis? Psychosis is not being grounded or connected; losing a sense of reality and suffering from delusions or hallucinations. Regular users are 5X more likely than non-users to have a psychotic disorder. Occasional users are 3X more likely than non-users to have a psychotic disorder.⁷

Psychotic Disorders Based on Amount of Use

Regular users **5X** more likely. Occasional **3X** more likely.

1 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2009 Report

2 Denver Post 10/20/14

3 <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana/how-does-marijuana-use-affect-your-brain-body>.

4 Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, 2010 Drug and Alcohol Use and Academic Performance Report. 2010. www.cadca.org

5 National Institute on Drug Abuse <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana/letter-director>

6 Office of National Drug Control Policy 'What Americans Need to Know About Marijuana' publication

7 Proportion of patients in south London with first-episode psychosis attributable to use of high potency cannabis: thelancet.com/psychiatry, February 18, 2015

**MYTH
or
FACT**

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Myth: Our prisons are full of people convicted of simple marijuana possession.

FACT: Less than 1.4% of prisoners are in prison for marijuana drug offense only. Others are criminals guilty of trafficking, growing, manufacturing, selling, or distributing —convicted of multiple offenses that include a marijuana charge. ¹

Myth: Marijuana is not addictive.

FACT:
9% of people who use marijuana will become dependent on it.
17% of those who start using in their teens will become dependent on it.
25-50% of daily users are dependent on it. ²

Myth: Marijuana has never killed anyone.

FACT: News headlines: “Father of dead baby smoked pot next to car;” “Family in marijuana-edibles murder speak out.” Read more at: ³

Myth: Marijuana is less dangerous than alcohol.

FACT: ²

EFFECTS	Alcohol	Marijuana
Impairs judgment	yes	yes
Slows reaction time	yes	yes
Affects motor skills	yes	yes
Increases risk for accidents	yes	yes
Changes behavior and mood	yes	yes
Dependence/addiction	yes	yes

Myth: Legalized marijuana will lower crime.

FACT: Marijuana became legal in Colorado on January 1, 2014. Crime rate in Denver is up for the first six months in 2014 by 6.7% compared to the same time period in 2013. ⁵

Myth: Tax revenue from drug sales will offset increased costs to society.

FACT: Current alcohol tax revenues cover less than 10% of alcohol-related costs which equal 223.5 billion annually in health care, criminal justice and workplace lost productivity. ⁴

Myth: Legalized marijuana will reduce illegal drug trade and cartel activities.

FACT: Black market sales and growing operations, drug cartels and illegal drug trafficking are still exploding problems in Colorado. ⁵

¹ APAAC, Fischer, Daryl, Ph.D, Prisoners in Arizona: A Profile of the Inmate Population, March 4, 2010 and Office of Drug Control Policy “Who Is Really In Prison for Marijuana.” publication www.prisonpolicy.org/scans/whos_in_prison_for_marij.pdf

² NIDA.gov

³ <http://marijuanaharmlessthinkagain.org/true-stories/>

⁴ <http://www.cdc.gov/features/alcoholconsumption/>; [Taxpolicycenter.org](http://www.taxpolicycenter.org); <http://www.ttb.gov/pdf/budget/2012bib.pdf>

⁵ Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Report: Legalization of Marijuana In Colorado the Impact, Volume 2, August 2014

PARENTS

FAST FACTS on Marijuana Risks

A LOOK INTO A CHILD'S FUTURE

Drop in Intelligence

A new study provides firm evidence that marijuana is harmful to the adolescent brain. Young, frequent users were found to have an 8 point IQ drop.⁹



High Addiction Rates 17%

Seventeen percent of people who started using marijuana in their teens will become dependent upon it.

25-50%

Those who use marijuana daily are 25 to 50% more likely to become dependent/addicted.¹⁰

TODAY's Marijuana is a Powerful Drug

In the 1970's, THC potency was about 3%. Today, marijuana plants contain about 14% THC. Oil extracted from the plant contains about 60% THC.¹ Users smoke marijuana or inhale concentrated THC using the oil in vaporizer-type pens. In Colorado, 45% of marijuana use is from edibles infused with the potent oil.²

Intoxication and Impairment

The drug alters the brain, causing euphoria. It impairs short-term memory, attention, judgment, cognitive functions, coordination and balance. It increases heart rate 20-100% and can cause psychotic episodes.³

School Problems

Lower Grades and Drop Out Rates: Students who smoke marijuana tend to get lower grades and are more likely to drop out of high school.⁴ Students who use marijuana before the age 15 are three times more likely to have left school by age 16.⁴

Risky Behaviors

Poor Judgment: Marijuana use compromises judgment, which can lead to engaging in risky behaviors.⁵

Accidents: Marijuana affects a person's sense of time and coordination, raising the risk of injury or death from car crashes or other accidents. These effects can last up to 24 hours after use.⁵

Leads to Other Drugs: Research shows that youth who start using marijuana early are more likely to use other illegal drugs.⁶

Mental Health

Chronic marijuana use is associated with or possibly causes increased risk of schizophrenia in vulnerable people. It is also associated with increased risk of anxiety, depression, and a motivational syndrome (a diminished or lost drive to engage in formerly rewarding activities).⁷

What to Watch For

Marijuana causes changes in behavior such as lethargy, listlessness, food cravings, lack of coordination, very red and bloodshot eyes, acting unusually giggly or having a hard time remembering things.⁸ Images to the right show what you might see. Note: vaping devices do not emit an odor and are marketed for 'discreet use.'



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1 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2009 Report

2 Denver Post 10/20/14

3 <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana/how-does-marijuana-use-affect-your-brain-body>.

4 Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, 2010 Drug and Alcohol Use and Academic Performance Report. 2010. www.cadca.org

5 National Institute on Drug Abuse <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana/letter-director>

6 Office of National Drug Control Policy 'What Americans Need to Know About Marijuana' publication

7 <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana/there-link-between-marijuana-use-mental-illness>

8 <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/marijuana-facts-parents-need-to-know/want-to-know-more-some-faqs-about-marijuana>

9 Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences by Dr. Madeline Meier of Duke University, <http://www.pnas.org/content/109/40/E2657.full>

10 <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana/marijuana-addictive>