

MARIJUANA: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Marijuana, which can also be called weed, pot, dope, or cannabis, is the dried flowers and leaves of the cannabis plant. Marijuana is a psychoactive drug that contains close to 500 chemicals, including tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), a mind-altering compound that causes harmful health effects. Over the past few decades, the amount of THC in marijuana has steadily climbed; today's marijuana has three times the concentration of THC compared to 25 years ago.

Q. IS IT POSSIBLE TO “OVERDOSE” OR HAVE A “BAD REACTION” TO MARIJUANA?

A. YES. The signs of using too much marijuana are similar to its typical effects, 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 an injury, such as a motor vehicle crash, fall, or poisoning. Eating foods or drinking beverages that contain marijuana increase the risk of poisoning.

Q. IS MARIJUANA ADDICTIVE?

A. YES. Marijuana can be addictive. Some users become dependent and have trouble quitting even if it interferes with their life. Marijuana use disorder is common and can range from mild problematic use to severe addiction.

Q. ISN'T SMOKING MARIJUANA LESS DANGEROUS THAN SMOKING CIGARETTES?

A. NO. Both marijuana and cigarette smoke can be harmful. Marijuana smoke deposits four times more tar in the lungs and contains 50-70% more cancer-causing substances than tobacco smoke does. More research is needed to fully understand the connection between marijuana and long-term effects such as cancer.

Q. IT'S LEGAL IN MANY STATES, SO DOESN'T THAT MEAN MARIJUANA IS SAFE?

A. NO. The fact that it's legal does not mean that it is safe. Marijuana use can have negative and long-term effects, including:



Brain health: Marijuana use at a young age can cause permanent IQ loss; these IQ points do not come back.



Mental health: Studies link marijuana use to depression, anxiety, suicide planning, and psychotic episodes. It is not known, however, if marijuana use is the cause of these conditions.



Athletic performance: Research shows that marijuana affects timing, movement, and coordination, which can harm athletic performance.



Driving: People who drive under the influence of marijuana can experience slower reactions, lane weaving, decreased coordination, and difficulty reacting to signals and sounds on the road.



Baby's health and development:

Marijuana use during pregnancy may be associated with fetal growth restriction, premature birth, stillbirth, and problems with brain development. THC and other chemicals can also be passed from a mother to her baby through breast milk.



Daily life: Research shows that people who use marijuana are more likely to have relationship problems, worse educational outcomes, lower career achievement, and reduced life satisfaction.

PAIN MANAGEMENT

People who use marijuana are often trying to control various types of pain. However, there are other options for safe and effective pain management with far fewer risks. Talk to your doctor to learn more about alternative options, such as:



OVER-THE-COUNTER PAIN RELIEVERS



PHYSICAL THERAPY



MASSAGE THERAPY



BIOFEEDBACK



RELAXATION TECHNIQUES



EXERCISE



ACUPUNCTURE THERAPY



PROFESSIONAL HELP COPING WITH THE EMOTIONAL EFFECTS OF PAIN

REMEMBER:

DO NOT MIX MARIJUANA WITH ALCOHOL, MEDICATIONS, OR OTHER DRUGS.

Using alcohol and marijuana at the same time is more dangerous than using either alone. There may be drug interactions between marijuana and your medication.

MARIJUANA CAN AFFECT PEOPLE DIFFERENTLY.

Marijuana affects everyone differently based on things like biology (e.g., genes), history of use, gender, how the drug is taken, and how strong it is. The effects of marijuana can be significantly delayed, particularly with edibles.

DON'T DRIVE OR OPERATE MACHINERY.

Marijuana slows your reaction time and makes it harder to tell distances. It is illegal to drive with ANY amount of marijuana in your saliva or blood stream. There is substantial evidence that marijuana use prior to driving increases the risk of being involved in a motor vehicle crash.

LOCK IT UP.

Be sure to keep all marijuana products in child-resistant packaging and clearly labeled. Lock up to avoid theft and prevent children and pets from accessing.

GET HELP.

Eating or drinking marijuana can make children and pets sick. If you suspect your child or pet has consumed marijuana, call the Poison Control hotline at **1-800-222-1222**. If someone has a severe reaction after consuming marijuana, **call 911**.

FOR HELP FINDING TREATMENT REFERRALS, CALL

211

LEARN MORE: [OKLAHOMA.GOV/HEALTH/OVERDOSE](https://oklahoma.gov/health/overdose)

This publication was supported by Cooperative Agreement 6 NU90TP921976-01 funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the Department of Health and Human Services. This publication was issued by the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH), an equal opportunity employer and provider. A digital file has been deposited with the Publications Clearinghouse of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries in compliance with section 3-114 of Title 65 of the Oklahoma Statutes and is available for download at documents.ok.gov. | oklahoma.gov/health | September 2022



OKLAHOMA
State Department
of Health