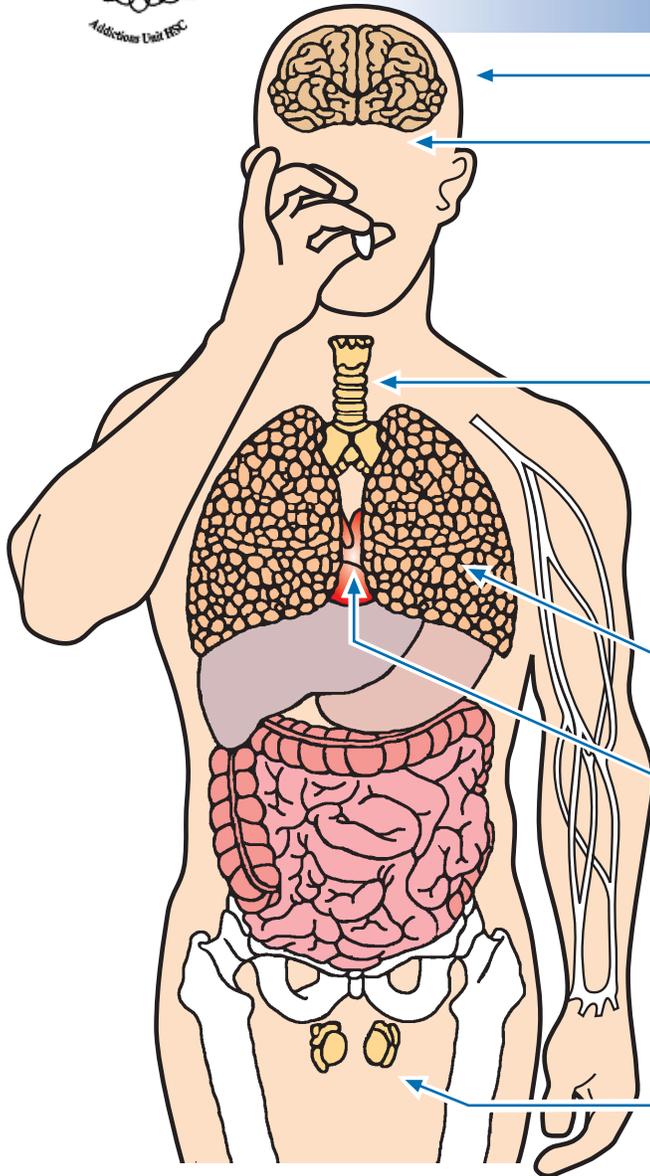




The Harmful Effects of MARIJUANA



BRAIN & CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM

Impaired thinking, mood, memory and coordination

- Marijuana (THC) is an extremely powerful intoxicant. It affects, changes and damages brain cells controlling thinking, emotion, pleasure, coordination, mood and memory. The pituitary gland is also damaged which regulates hunger, thirst, blood pressure, sexual behavior and release of sex hormones.

Clogged synapses, brain damage, and addiction

- Marijuana accumulates in the microscopic spaces between nerve cells in the brain called "synapses". This clogging interferes by slowing and impairing transfer of critical information.
- Long term use causes the brain to stop production of brain chemicals necessary to "feel good" - a negative feedback condition. And, the user becomes chemically addicted to marijuana.

EYES

- Sleepy-looking, blood-shot eyes with dilated pupils

THROAT

- Irritates membranes of the esophagus
- Increases chance of developing cancer of larynx and esophagus

LUNGS

- Significant damage and destruction of the air sacs of the lungs, reducing the lungs' ability to bring in oxygen and remove carbon dioxide – emphysema
- Causes bronchial tubes to be inflamed, thickened, and to produce more mucus, resulting in narrowing of the air passages – chronic bronchitis.
- Marijuana smoke has twice as much "tar" as cigarette smoke and significantly increases chance of lung cancer, inflammation and infection

HEART

- Speeds up heartbeat as much as 50%, increases blood pressure, and poses great risk to those with hypertension and heart disease.

REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM

Males & Females

- Marijuana use can decrease and degenerate sperm, sperm count, movement and cause lowered sex drive. Females can have egg damage, suppression of ovulation, disrupt menstrual cycles, and alteration of hormone levels.

Pregnancy & Unborn Babies

- Regular use during pregnancy can lower birth weight and cause problems during delivery.

Chromosome Damage

- Can destroy the number of chromosomes, resulting in cell abnormalities and impaired function.

OTHER EFFECTS ON CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM

- Distortions of perception, thinking, and reality
- Difficulty in forming concepts and thoughts
- Poor concentration
- Mental confusion
- Loss of motivation
- Wide mood swings
- Aggression and hostility
- Depression, anxiety and paranoia

IMMUNE SYSTEM

Marijuana depresses immune systems' ability to protect itself and body against invading bacteria, viruses, chemicals, foreign particles, parasites, fungal microorganisms, infections, and decreases ability to protect and prevent growth of cancer cells throughout the body. **ORGANS AFFECTED:** thymus, lymph system, spleen, stomach, duodenum, and bone marrow.

ENDOCRINE SYSTEM:

Marijuana damages the network of glands, organs, and hormones involved in growth and development, energy levels and reproduction. **ORGANS AND GLANDS AFFECTED:** pituitary gland, thyroid gland, stomach, duodenum, pancreas, adrenal glands, and testis.





The Harmful Effects of **MARIJUANA**

What happens to marijuana in the body?

- When smoked, the active part of marijuana (THC) is rapidly absorbed and its effects appear within minutes, giving a relaxed sleepy feeling, increased sensitivity to surroundings and increased hunger.
- Effects usually do not last more than 2 or 3 hours after a single marijuana “joint”.
- The THC may be stored in fat in the body for up to 2 weeks.

What are the short-term effects?

After a “high” feeling, a person usually becomes drowsy. Other effects on the body include:

- Increase in heart rate
- Red eyes
- Decrease in muscle strength
- With higher doses, a person may fall down when he or she tries to get up from sitting or lying down because of problems with blood pressure.
- Decrease in hearing
- Decrease in concentration
- Feelings of panic, paranoia or mania

What are the long-term effects?

- Harm to lungs that is similar to that of long-term tobacco use. This includes bronchitis, cough and cancer.
- Use during pregnancy may increase the chance of a smaller birth weight for the baby.
- Being able to do things that need coordination may be slower than usual.
- May make health problem such as heart disease worse. Marijuana makes the heart work harder.
- There are changes in the way the brain works and the actual structure of the brain.
- There may be trouble with thinking, solving problems, paying attention and memory, as well as a decrease in motivation.
- There is a chance of an increased risk of head and neck cancers and mental illnesses such as depression and schizophrenia.
- Smoking marijuana has 50-70% more carcinogens (meaning it causes cancer) than tobacco smoke and usually more than 400 other chemicals added (e.g. PCP, embalming fluids, etc.)
- Marijuana stays in the body for an extended period of time (i.e. if smoking it daily for a long time, it may remain in the body for up to one month after last use).

Is there withdrawal from marijuana?

Marijuana use on its own would not require being in a detox unit. New research suggests that heavy users of marijuana may have symptoms of withdrawal. These people may have symptoms that include: cravings for marijuana, irritability, feeling restless, headaches, poor appetite, and depression. These symptoms occurred by the second or third day after the last use of marijuana and lasted for about 2 to 3 weeks.



TRIGGERS	PLAN FOR TRIGGERS
<input type="checkbox"/> WHEN YOU ARE ON HOLIDAYS	
<input type="checkbox"/> WHEN YOU FEEL IRRITABLE OR TIRED	
<input type="checkbox"/> ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS (CHRISTMAS, BIRTHDAYS)	
<input type="checkbox"/> FEEL LONELY OR BORED	
<input type="checkbox"/> FEEL PRESSURED BY LACK OF MONEY OR DEBT	
<input type="checkbox"/> WHEN YOU HAVE MONEY TO SPEND	
<input type="checkbox"/> FEEL AFRAID	
<input type="checkbox"/> FED UP WITH LIFE OR WHEN YOU FEEL DEPRESSED	
<input type="checkbox"/> START THINKING YOU ARE HOOKED ON ALCOHOL OR DRUGS	
<input type="checkbox"/> NOT FEELING UNDERSTOOD	
<input type="checkbox"/> UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS OF SELF OR OTHERS	
<input type="checkbox"/> NOT USING SUPPORT SYSTEMS (ISOLATION)	
<input type="checkbox"/> GOING AROUND FRIENDS OR PLACES	
<input type="checkbox"/> RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS	
<input type="checkbox"/> SELF-ESTEEM ISSUES	
<input type="checkbox"/> PROBLEMS AT WORK, SCHOOL OR HOME	
<input type="checkbox"/> WHEN YOU HAVE TO MEET NEW PEOPLE	