



Fact Sheet: Dangers of Using Marijuana

SHORT-TERM DANGERS

Dangers a person might face within a short time after use.

1. **Marijuana use is illegal.** You could get in trouble with the law, your family, and the school.
2. **Marijuana is a drug.** THC is the drug in marijuana. It affects the brain's nerve cells making it hard to remember things.
3. **Marijuana affects your self-control.** This change could become dangerous. Your sense of time, coordination, and judgment will be affected. You may not be able to make safe, quick decisions when riding a bike, walking down a busy street, or cooking something on the stove.
4. **Marijuana use can become scary.** Marijuana affects your senses. You could see, smell, or hear things that are disturbing. Marijuana use is not always pleasant.
5. **Marijuana use can be embarrassing.** Since you lose some self-control, you might do things you would not have done had you not been using marijuana.
6. **Marijuana has hundreds of chemicals in it.** These chemicals hurt the body. Some research shows that the use of marijuana can cause lung cancer. Other research linking marijuana use to cancer is not as clear. Marijuana is not regulated by the government. People who sell marijuana can put many different chemicals in it.

LONG-TERM DANGERS

Dangers a person might face after using the drug many times over a long period of time.

1. **Marijuana use can be addictive.** This means you want to use it more and more.

When someone is addicted to a drug, he or she depends on it to feel normal.

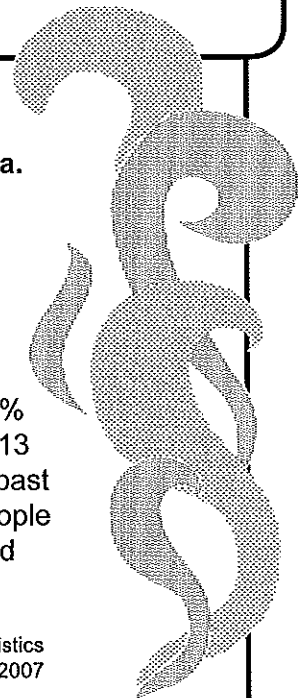
2. **Marijuana use can reduce your desire to get things done.** You may not want to do things that need to be done.
3. **Marijuana use can lead to the use of other drugs.** People who use marijuana often spend time with people who have or sell other drugs.

Some young people feel pressured to use marijuana.

Peer pressure and curiosity can tempt young people to use marijuana. It is best not to try it.

Most young people don't use marijuana. Less than 1% of young people ages 12 or 13 have used marijuana in the past month. Only 6 percent of people 12 years of age or older used marijuana in the past year.

National Center for Health Statistics
Health, United States, 2007





Fact Sheet: Dangers of Using Alcohol

SHORT-TERM DANGERS

Dangers a person might face within a short time after use.

1. **Alcohol affects the brain.** Alcohol affects your coordination and balance. You could have trouble walking and bump into things. You could hurt yourself by stumbling or falling. Alcohol can cause you to have blurred vision, slurred speech, memory loss, and even blackouts.
2. **Alcohol can give you a false sense of self-confidence.** You think you are walking, talking, or playing a game okay, but you really aren't.
3. **Alcohol use is illegal.** It is illegal for people your age to drink alcohol. It can get you in trouble with your parents, the law, and the school.
4. **Alcohol can affect relationships with others.** People can act foolishly or get into arguments more easily with others when they are drinking. Sometimes people who have been drinking say things to other people that are mean or rude. Then, they feel embarrassed later. Some people may get into physical fights more easily.
5. **Alcohol can affect your judgment.** The time it takes a person to respond to a new situation will be slower. You may not be able to make good, quick decisions. Your sense of what is right and what is wrong may not be the same. You could take harmful risks, such as act on a dare or give into peer pressure. You might do something with a boyfriend or girlfriend that you think is wrong or off-limits if you are under the influence of alcohol.
6. **Alcohol is a depressant.** It slows down the body and mind. If you are already feeling sad or depressed when you start drinking, it can make you feel worse.

LONG-TERM DANGERS

Dangers a person might face after using the drug many times over a long period of time.

1. **Alcohol affects the body.** It can damage many of the body's organs, such as the liver and stomach. Alcohol also causes the blood to rise to the skin's surface making the person feel warm even when it's cold.
2. **Alcohol use can lead to alcoholism.** Alcoholism is a very serious disease. It can cause problems for an individual and his or her family, work, and friends.

When someone is addicted to a drug, he or she depends on it to feel normal. Alcoholism is the word used to describe the disease a person has when he or she depends on alcohol to feel normal. He or she is addicted to alcohol.

One out of every four adults do not drink.

Most young people your age have not tried alcohol.

- Only 2% of young people ages 12 or 13 have used alcohol in the past month.
- Less than 23% of people 12 years of age or older used alcohol in the past month.



National Center for Health Statistics
Health, United States, 2007