

# THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF MARIJUANA

## BRAIN & CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM IMPAIRED THINKING, MOOD, MEMORY, AND COORDINATION

• Marijuana (THC) is an extremely powerful and pleasurable intoxicant. It affects, alters, 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.

## OTHER AFFECTS 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

## 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.

## 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 AND GLANDS AFFECTED:

- Thymus
- Lymph System
- Spleen
- Stomach
- Duodenum
- Bone Marrow

## HEART

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

## 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
- Testis

## 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 abnormalities similar to Fetal Alcohol Syndrome—small head, irritability, poor growth and development.

## CHROMOSOME DAMAGE

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

