

Marijuana Facts for Parents

Marijuana is a drug made from the leaves and flower tops of the plant *Cannabis sativa*. All forms of cannabis contain THC, the main active ingredient in marijuana, which is responsible for its psychoactive effects. Marijuana's effect on the user depends on the strength or potency of the THC it contains. All forms of cannabis also contain more than 400 other chemicals.

Types of Marijuana	Slang Terms	What it looks like	How it is used
Marijuana (Acapulco Gold, Sinsemilla, Thai Sticks)	Pot, Grass, Weed, Reefer, Dope, Kif, Skunk, Boom, Gangster, Mary Jane, 420	Dark green or brown shredded leafy material, stems, seeds, and flowers of the hemp plant	Smoked in a pipe or rolled in a cigarette (called a joint or nail), or eaten
Hashish	Hash	Sticky resin from the female plant flowers, greenish-brown mass with a bitter taste	Smoked or eaten
Hashish oil	Hash oil	A tar-like liquid varying in color from clear to black	Smoked or eaten

Effects of Marijuana

All forms of marijuana can be harmful in a number of ways, through both immediate effects and damage to health over time. Because users often inhale the unfiltered smoke deeply and then hold it in their lungs as long as possible, marijuana is damaging to the lungs and pulmonary system. Physical effects may include the following:

- Bloodshot eyes
- Relaxed inhibitions, risky sexual behavior
- Increased appetite
- Difficulty concentrating, poor study habits
- Trouble handling complex tasks
- Dry mouth and throat
- Substantial increase in heart rate
- Loss of short-term memory (memory for recent events)
- Altered perceptions and reaction time

Today the THC content of marijuana is higher than in past. This makes marijuana more potent, which in turn increases the likelihood of psychotic reactions such as anxiety, amnesia and confusion. Long-term users of marijuana may develop psychological dependence and require more of the drug to get the same effect. The drug can become the center of their lives.

Warning Signs

- Signs of drugs and drug paraphernalia, including pipes and cigarette "rolling" papers
- Odor of burnt leaves on clothes and in the bedroom
- Use of incense and other deodorizers
- Use of eye drops to clear redness in eyes
- Clothes, posters, and jewelry that promote drug use

