Marijuana

Marijuana—also called weed, herb, pot, grass, bud, ganja, Mary Jane, and a vast number of other slang terms—is a greenish-gray mixture of the dried, shredded leaves and flowers of Cannabis sativa—the hemp plant. Some users smoke marijuana in hand-rolled cigarettes called joints; many use pipes, water pipes (sometimes called bongs), or marijuana cigars called blunts (often made by slicing open cigars and replacing some or all of the tobacco with marijuana).1 Marijuana can also be used to brew tea and, particularly when it is sold or consumed for medicinal purposes, is frequently mixed into foods ("edibles") such as brownies, cookies, or candies. In addition, concentrated resins containing high doses of marijuana’s active ingredients, including honey-like "hash oil," waxy "budder," and hard amber-like "shatter," are increasingly popular among both recreational and medical users.

The main psychoactive (mind-altering) chemical in marijuana, responsible for most of the intoxicating effects sought by recreational users, is delta-9-tetrahydro-cannabinol (THC). The chemical is found in resin produced by the leaves and buds primarily of the female cannabis plant. The plant also contains more than 500 other chemicals, including over 100 compounds that are chemically related to THC, called cannabinoids.2

Effects:

Other physical effects of marijuana include:

Dizziness

Shallow breathing

Red eyes and dilated pupils
Dry mouth

Increased appetite

Slowed reaction time (If you drive after using marijuana, your risk of being in a car accident more than doubles.)

If you’re a long-time user, you can have physical withdrawal symptoms -- like cravings, irritability, sleeplessness, and less appetite -- when you stop.

**Helpful ways to stop addiction:** If a person feels that using marijuana is making his life better, you will have a hard time convincing him (or her) to stop smoking the drug. You may have to work with your friend or family member to remind him of the way things were before he began to rely on marijuana to detach him from problems and emotions. Help him compare the way things are now with earlier times when he might have talked about his plans and future with enthusiasm.

You may have to convince him that the dreams he gave up on can still be attained if he quits cannabis use with your help. These earlier dreams and enthusiasms are the key to helping many people envision a new life without drugs, but that new desire may be fleeting. If you get his interest again, you must move quickly to the creation of a new sobriety so these dreams can be renewed.

You will have to work with this person to get him to stop using the drug. He will have to stay away from drug-using and drug-selling friends because most people easily fall back into drug abuse when hanging out with the people still involved in the drug habit. If a person feels that using marijuana is making his life better, you will have a hard time convincing him (or her) to stop smoking the drug. You may have to work with your friend or family member to remind him of the way things were before he began to rely on marijuana to detach him from problems and emotions. Help him compare the way things are now with earlier times when he might have talked about his plans and future with enthusiasm.
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