Marijuana

Marijuana is a product of the hemp plant, Cannabis sativa. Like tobacco smoke, marijuana smoke can cause coughing, phlegm, wheezing, bronchitis, and greater risk of lung infection.[1,2]

Fast Facts

- Like tobacco smoke, marijuana smoke contains cancer-causing chemicals. There are 33 of these chemicals in marijuana.[2]
- Marijuana smoke can leave four times as much tar in the lungs than cigarettes.[2]
- Marijuana smokers tend to inhale more deeply, keep the smoke in longer, and smoke without filters. This can cause toxins to reach higher levels in the lungs.[3]

Short-term effects of smoking marijuana[1]

- Problems with memory and learning
- Distorted perception (sight, sound, time, touch)
- Trouble with thinking and problem solving
- Loss of motor coordination
- Increased heart rate and anxiety

Long term effects of smoking marijuana

- Damage to the lungs because it burns 16 times "hotter" than tobacco[4]
- Increased chance of getting lung infections, like pneumonia[3]
  - » Infections are caused by a mold that can live on the marijuana plant and be inhaled in the smoke
- Decreased fertility in both men and women[5]
  - » In women, marijuana use may disrupt the menstrual cycle
  - » In men, marijuana can decrease sperm quality and testosterone levels

For more information or help with quitting marijuana visit:

- American Lung Association : 1-800-586-4872 or visit www.lung.org
- Drug Free Helpline: 1-855-DRUG FREE (1-855-378-4373) or visit the website; www.drugfree.org
- National Institute for Drug Abuse: 1-877-643-2644 or visit www. drugabuse.gov

[1]*National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2014, January). Marijuana. Retrieved November 3, 2014, from http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana*

[2]*American Lung Association. (2014). Marijuana. Retrieved November 3, 2014, from http://www.lung.org/associations/states/colorado/tobacco/marijuana.html*

[3]*American Thoracic Society. (2013, July). Smoking Marijuana and the Lungs. Retrieved November 4, 2014, from http://patients.thoracic.org/information-series/en/resources/ATS_Patient_Ed_Marijuana.pdf*

[4]*Stevens, P. & Smith, R. Substance Abuse Counseling: Theory and Practice. Second Edition. Columbus: Merrill Prentice Hall, 2001. Print.*

[5]*University of Washington, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute. (2013, June). Marijuana and Reproduction/ Pregnancy. Retrieved November 2, 2014, from http://learnaboutmarijuanawa.org/factsheets/reproduction.htm*

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