

## Reducing Harm & Finding Help, Continued

appointments 1-7 times per week). Effective types of counseling for marijuana addiction include cognitive behavioral therapy, motivational interviewing, and twelve-step facilitation.

There are also recovery support groups and online forums that can help people struggling with marijuana addiction.

Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, Marijuana Anonymous and groups like SMART Recovery or LifeRing are all available to support people with



marijuana addiction. Recovery apps specific to marijuana addiction can be downloaded to your smart phone that provide lists of recovery support meetings, reading material, tools like sobriety counters, and more.



# Marijuana



## Information about Your Health



Institute for Research, Education  
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## Marijuana – What Is It?

Marijuana refers to the dried leaves, flowers, stems, and seeds of the hemp plant. The plant contains a number of chemicals called cannabinoids, some of which are mind-altering like *delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol* (commonly called THC). Extracts and oils with high amounts of THC can also be made from the cannabis plant.

Marijuana is most commonly smoked, but also eaten in foods or inhaled as a vapor.

Although marijuana has been illegal under federal law since the 1970s, it is now legal for recreational and medicinal use in some U.S. states. Its medicinal benefits are not well studied, but it is currently prescribed to reduce seizures, pain and inflammation, nausea, and other health problems.



## Marijuana & My Health

### Shorter term

*Intoxication:* People using marijuana can experience issues with attention and memory. Marijuana use also slows down reaction time and lessens balance and coordination. For some people, using marijuana can create or worsen mental illness symptoms like anxiety, paranoia, and hallucinations.

*Unknown drugs:* Marijuana that is bought illegally carries additional risks. Users cannot be sure of the drug's contents or dose.

### Longer term

*Addiction:* Marijuana has addictive potential. Not everyone who uses marijuana becomes addicted, but some do. People who use marijuana daily

## Synthetic marijuana

Synthetic marijuana leads to thousands of ER visits every year. Products like “Spice” and “K2” are unregulated, which means it’s impossible to know the content or dose of the drug inside the package. There is limited research on synthetic marijuana, but it appears to be more potent than plant-based marijuana. Users can experience increased heart rate, anxiety, disorientation, and hallucinations.

often experience withdrawal symptoms if they stop. Symptoms of marijuana withdrawal can be irritability, trouble sleeping, anxiety, and cravings.

*Other health issues:* Smoke from



marijuana can damage lungs over time, resulting in an ongoing cough and frequent colds. Marijuana use during adolescence can affect brain development and reduce the brain's ability to function over a lifetime.

## Marijuana - Reducing Harm & Finding Help

Unlike alcohol, there are no official guidelines for low-risk marijuana use. Marijuana use appears to carry more health risks when it is used frequently and at high doses, but health authorities have not created specific recommendations in these areas.

Thousands of Americans seek treatment for marijuana addiction every year. Marijuana addiction can be treated in a residential setting (often called “rehab”) or in an outpatient setting (when the patient lives at home, but goes to treatment