



**\* REMEMBER:** A person's experience with any drug can vary. There are a number of things that have an impact on a person's experience with a drug including but not limited to: the amount consumed and strength of the drug consumed, the setting in which the drug is used, a person's mood or expectations prior to using the drug as well as the person's past experience with that drug.

- Marijuana is a hallucinogenic drug that comes from the Cannabis Sativa plant. This plant is used to produce three drugs:
  - Marijuana (pot, weed, grass, dope...) consists of the dried leaves and flowers of the plant.
  - Hashish (hash) is made from the dried resin at the top of the plant. Hashish is often "chunky" in appearance and brown or black in color.
  - Hash Oil is made from hashish. It can be brown, black, red or a clear sticky oil and is often placed in vials or bottle caps.
- Marijuana products are typically smoked. This drug can also be eaten.
- The chemical in these drugs that produces the high is called THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol). The THC content in today's marijuana and marijuana products is considerably higher than it was years ago. This has resulted in a drug that is much more potent.

Short Term Effects may include:

- red eyes
- drowsiness, slowed speech
- feelings of euphoria, giggling, laughter
- increased heart rate and blood pressure
- lowered skin temperature
- strong desire for food
- time and space distortion
- decreased reactions and poor coordination
- concentration and memory problems
- dizziness/fainting with large, repetitive doses
- panic attacks, paranoia
- delusions, hallucinations
- Although the high from this drug typically lasts a couple of hours, the THC may continue to affect mental and physical functions long after the "high" has worn off.

Marijuana continued.....

Long term effects may include:

- short term memory impairment
- impaired learning and problem solving abilities
- respiratory problems: chronic cough, lung damage, increased risk of cancer
- immune system problems: more frequent or longer illnesses
- possible reproductive system problems: low sperm counts, impotence, irregular menstrual cycles.
- Frequent marijuana users may experience decreased motivation, low energy, loss of interest and apathy.

Other Dangers:

- Overdosing on marijuana is unlikely as long as it has not been laced with any other drugs such as cocaine. Fearfulness and anxiety are common following high doses.
- Marijuana is dangerous to use while driving or during any other activity that requires judgement, coordination and attentiveness.
- Marijuana can cause damage to a developing fetus if used during pregnancy.
- People with heart disease or high blood pressure may be at risk for further complications if they use this drug due to additional strain on the heart.
- THC is stored in the fat cells of the body. Elimination is a slow process and as a result a single large dose may be detectable in the body up to thirty days after use. Frequent users may have THC in their system for longer periods after discontinuing use.
- Dependence is possible. Withdrawal symptoms can include sleep disturbances, irritability, loss of appetite, restlessness, anxiety, sweating, chills and mild nausea.
- Frequent marijuana users can develop a tolerance to the drug meaning that they will need to use more to feel the effects.
- There has been little research on the dangers of marijuana in combination with other drugs. Marijuana, when combined with alcohol, increases the depressant effects and may prevent vomiting since it suppresses the gag reflex. This may be a problem if someone has drunk a large quantity of alcohol as it may interfere with the body's ability to defend itself against alcohol poisoning. There are possible dangerous interactions with drugs that suppress the immune system or that treat heart or blood pressure conditions.

**Is my use of alcohol or other drugs a problem for me? If you are wondering whether it may be causing problems for you and would like to speak to an AFM Youth Counsellor you can call us at ( 204)944-6235 for more information.**