

Marijuana -“pot or weed”

What is marijuana?

Marijuana is a dry, shredded green and brown mix of leaves, flowers, stems and seeds. These are from the hemp plant *Cannabis sativa*. The main mind-altering ingredient is tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC.

How is marijuana used?

Marijuana is usually smoked in hand rolled cigarettes (joints) or in pipes or water pipes (bongs). It can also be mixed in food or brewed as a tea.

How does marijuana affect health?

There can be short-and long-term effects on your physical and mental health.

- **Heart:** Marijuana raises your heart rate 20-100% shortly after smoking. This can last up to 3 hours. You have a greater risk of heart attack in the first hour after smoking. It can also raise your blood pressure.
- **Lungs:** Regular marijuana smokers can have many of the same lung problems as tobacco smokers. These can be daily cough, chest illnesses and infections.

- **Mental Health:** Using a lot of marijuana can produce illusions and paranoia. It can add to depression and anxiety. There may be less drive.
- **Driving:** Marijuana causes poor judgment and motor skills. Smoking more than doubles a driver’s risk of being in an accident.

What about Medical Marijuana?

The FDA has approved marijuana for pain and nausea in several states. Doctors prescribe it for illnesses such as:

- Cancer
- HIV
- Multiple sclerosis
- Glaucoma

It is not legal in Wisconsin.

Is Marijuana addictive?

Research shows that about 9% of users become addicted. The number is larger for those that start young and those that smoke daily. Daily smokers who stop may have irritability, sleeplessness, anxiety and drug craving.

For more information on marijuana go to National Institute on Drug Abuse:

www.drugabuse.gov

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person’s health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright ©7/2019. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7542.