

# MARIJUANA FACTS FOR PARENTS

## Risky Behaviors

- Marijuana use compromises judgment, which can lead to engaging in risky behaviors and experiencing their negative consequences.
- Marijuana can seriously affect a person's sense of time and coordination, raising the risk of injury or death from car crashes or other accidents. These effects can last up to 24 hours after marijuana use.
- In 2005, nearly 242,200 people were admitted to emergency rooms suffering from marijuana-related problems.<sup>1</sup>
- Research has demonstrated that young people who use marijuana are more likely to use other illegal drugs. For example, the risk of using cocaine is much greater for those who have tried marijuana than for those who have never used.<sup>2</sup>

## Effects on Mental Health

- Research has demonstrated that kids age 12 to 17 who use marijuana weekly are three times more likely than nonusers to have suicidal thoughts.
- In addition to psychosis, chronic marijuana use has been associated with an array of psychological effects, including depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, and personality disturbances. One of the most frequently cited is an "amotivational syndrome," which describes a diminished or lost drive to engage in formerly rewarding activities.<sup>3</sup>

## Effects on the Adolescent Brain

- Marijuana impairs the brain's effectiveness, ability to concentrate, coordination and ability to retain information by changing the way sensory information reaches and is processed by the brain.
- Compared to nonsmoking peers, students who smoke marijuana tend to get lower grades and are more likely to drop out of high school. Students who use marijuana before the age 15 are three times more likely to have left school by age 16.<sup>4</sup>

## Marijuana is Addictive

- Current research has demonstrated the earlier marijuana use begins, the more likely the user will become dependent on it or other types of drugs later in life.
- Regular marijuana users have a 40% chance of become addicted (2 of every 5 regular users).
- In 2006, nearly 290,000 people entered drug treatment programs to kick their marijuana habit.<sup>5</sup>

## What Parents Should Look For

- Marijuana is usually smoked using cigarette rolling papers, a purchased water bong, or a makeshift bong that can be made from a variety of items. Hash can be smoked or eaten, and is sometimes cooked into baked goods.
- Signs and symptoms of marijuana use include: dilated pupils and bloodshot eyes, cigarette rolling papers, seeds that have been cleaned from marijuana, smell on clothing, room, or car, or air fresheners disguising smell, sleepy appearance, reduced motivation, pipes, bongs or homemade devices, or sticky residue from burned marijuana<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration. (SAMHSA) *Tips for Teens*. 2008. [www.samhsa.org](http://www.samhsa.org)

<sup>2</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), *Drug Facts: Marijuana*. December 2012. [www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana](http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, *2010 Drug and Alcohol Use and Academic Performance Report*. 2010. [www.cadca.org](http://www.cadca.org)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Ibid