

Health Bulletin

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

#66 in a series of Health Bulletins on issues of pressing interest to all New Yorkers



Marijuana

Is it holding you back?



• Available in Spanish and Chinese: call 311 or visit nyc.gov/health
• Disponible en español: llame al 311 o visite nyc.gov/health
• 需要中文服務 - 可電 311 或造訪網址: nyc.gov/health







Marijuana can cause many problems.

It can harm your health in ways you may not realize.

- When you use marijuana, you may make poor choices, including:
 - Risky physical activities, such as driving under the influence.
 - Unsafe sexual behavior that puts you at risk for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.
- Marijuana can cause attention, memory and learning problems.
- It can cause or worsen depression and other mental illnesses.
- Marijuana can take away your energy and motivation to get things done.
- Children and teens who use marijuana are more likely to develop other drug-related problems at some point in their lives.

Smoking marijuana causes many of the same problems as smoking tobacco.

- Regular smokers cough more and get more colds, bronchitis and other infections.
- Long-term use can cause lung damage – just like smoking cigarettes.
- Babies of women who smoke are more likely to be born too small.

Marijuana today can be a lot stronger than it was 30 years ago.

- The amount of THC (the active ingredient in marijuana) can be several times greater today than it was in the past.
- Like other street drugs, marijuana may be “cut” (mixed) with other drugs or substances without you knowing it. Sometimes these “cuts” are dangerous and can make you sick.



Using marijuana is illegal.

- Medical use of marijuana is not permitted in New York State.
- You can be fined and even arrested for using marijuana.
- Penalties for selling are even more severe.
- Penalties for driving under the influence of marijuana are the same as for drunk driving.
- Marijuana may show up on a drug test days or even weeks after you used.
- A drug felony conviction can keep you from getting a student loan, a job, a house or an apartment – even years later.





Heavy users often suffer bad effects.

These include:

- **A strong urge to use that is hard to resist.**
- **Trouble cutting down or stopping:**
 - Even when using interferes with work, school or relationships.
 - Despite money or legal problems caused by using.
- **Loss of energy or motivation.**
 - Having a hard time fulfilling responsibilities or getting things done.
 - Trouble waking up in the morning and getting to work or school on time.
 - Difficulty finishing projects, completing plans and following through on ideas.
- **Depression.**
 - Feeling sad, anxious or hopeless much of the time.
 - Feeling worse when you can't use.
- **Memory problems.**
 - Forgetting all or part of what happens when you use.
 - Having trouble paying attention, staying focused or learning new things.
- **Social problems.**
 - Acting irritable and aggressive in inappropriate situations.
 - Deteriorating relationships with family and friends.
- **Preoccupation.**
 - Thinking a lot about getting and using marijuana.
 - Neglecting family, friends, work and school.

Are You Dependent On Marijuana?

Answer "yes" or "no"

Have you ever:

Thought you should...	Cut down on your marijuana use?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Become...	Annoyed when someone criticized your marijuana use?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Felt scared, bad or...	Guilty about your marijuana use?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Needed an...	Eye-opener to feel better in the morning?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

YES to 1 or 2 questions = possible problem

YES to 3 or 4 questions = probable dependence

Help Is Available

Counseling and self-help organizations can help you quit or cut down.

- Talk to your doctor or a substance abuse counselor.
- Be honest about:
 - How much marijuana you use.
 - How often you use.
 - Problems your drug use is causing.
- Counseling can help treat marijuana dependence.
- Self-help organizations, such as 12-step programs with regular meetings, are also useful.

More Information and Help

- NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: nyc.gov/health or call 311
- Health Bulletins: nyc.gov/health or call 311:
 - #27 Drug-Free Kids: Parents Can make a Difference
 - #45 Depression: It's Treatable
 - #48 How Much Is Too Much (Alcohol)
 - #53 Healthy Parenting
 - #61 Help to Stop Using: Drug Problems Can Be Treated
 - #69 Is Your Child Abusing Prescription Drugs?
- LifeNet (24-hour confidential help for alcohol and other substance abuse problems): 1-800-LIFENET (1-800-543-3638)
- Spanish LifeNet: 1-877-AYUDESE (1-877-298-3373)
- Asian LifeNet (Mandarin, Cantonese and Korean): 1-877-990-8585
- National Institute on Drug Abuse: www.nida.nih.gov/infofacts/marijuana.html or www.marijuana-info.org
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: www.oas.samhsa.gov/marijuana.htm
- Marijuana Anonymous: www.ma-newyork.org or call 212-459-4423

**DIAL
311**

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New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

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