

# 10 Things Every Parent, Teenager & Teacher Should Know About Marijuana

"Prohibition...goes beyond the bounds of reason in that it attempts to control a man's appetite by legislation and makes a crime out of things that are not crimes. A prohibition law strikes a blow at the very principles upon which our government was founded."

-- Abraham Lincoln, December, 1840

This pamphlet was researched and produced as a public service by the Family Council on Drug Awareness, P.O. Box 71093, LA CA 90071-0093

## 1 Q. What is Marijuana?

A. "Marijuana" refers to the dried leaves and flowers of the cannabis plant [1], which contain the non-narcotic chemical THC at various potencies. It is smoked or eaten to produce the feeling of being "high." The different strains of this herb produce different sensual effects, ranging from sedative to stimulant.

## 2 Q. Who Uses Marijuana?

A. There is no simple profile of a typical marijuana user. It has been used for 1000s of years for medical, social, and religious reasons and for relaxation [2]. Several of our Presidents [3] are believed to have smoked it. One out of every five Americans say they have tried it. And it is still popular among artists, writers, musicians, activists, lawyers, inventors, working people, etc.

## 3 Q. How Long Have People Been Using Marijuana?

A. Marijuana has been used since ancient times [4]. While field hands and working people have often smoked the raw plant, aristocrats historically prefer hashish [5] made from the cured flowers of the plant. It was not seen as a problem until a calculated disinformation [sic] campaign was launched in the 1930s [6], and the first American laws against using it were passed [7].

## 4 Q. Is Marijuana Addictive?

A. No, it is not [8]. Most users are moderate consumers who smoke it socially to relax. We now know that 10% of our population have

"addictive personalities" and they are neither more nor less likely to overindulge in cannabis than in anything else. On a relative scale, marijuana is less habit forming than either sugar or chocolate but more so than anchovies. Sociologists report a general pattern of marijuana use that peaks in the early adult years, followed by a period of levelling off and then a gradual reduction in use [9].

#### 5 Q. Has Anyone Ever Died From Smoking Marijuana?

A. No; not one single case, not ever. THC is one of the few chemicals for which there is no known toxic amount [10]. The federal agency NIDA says that autopsies reveal that 75 people per year are high on marijuana when they die: this does not mean that marijuana caused or was even a factor in their deaths. The chart below compares the number of deaths attributable to selected substances in a typical year:

- Tobacco 340,000 - 395,000
- Alcohol (excluding crime/accidents) > 125,000
- Drug Overdose (prescription) 24,000 - 27,000
- Drug Overdose (illegal) 3,800 - 5,200
- Marijuana 0

\*Source: U.S. Government Bureau of Mortality Statistics, 1987

#### 6 Q. Does Marijuana Lead to Crime and/or Hard Drugs?

A. No [11]. The only crime most marijuana users commit is that they use marijuana. And, while many people who abuse dangerous drugs also smoke marijuana, the old "stepping stone" theory is now discredited, since virtually all of them started out "using" legal drugs like sugar, coffee, cigarettes, alcohol, etc.

#### 7 Q. Does Marijuana Make People Violent?

A. No. In fact, Federal Bureau of Narcotics director Harry Anslinger once told Congress just the opposite - that it leads to non-violence and pacifism [12]. If he was telling the truth (which he and key federal agencies have not often done regarding marijuana), then re-legalizing marijuana should be considered as one way to curb violence in our cities. The simple fact is that marijuana does not change your basic personality. The government says that over 20

million Americans still smoke it, probably including some of the nicest people you know.

#### 8 Q. How Does Marijuana Affect Your Health?

A. Smoking anything is not healthy, but marijuana is less dangerous than tobacco and people smoke less of it at a time. This health risk can be avoided by eating the plant instead of smoking it [13], or can be reduced by smoking smaller amounts of stronger marijuana. There is no proof that marijuana causes serious health or sexual problems [14] but, like alcohol, its use by children or adolescents is discouraged. Cannabis is a medicinal herb that has hundreds of proven, valuable therapeutic uses - from stress reduction to glaucoma to asthma to cancer therapy, etc. [15].

#### 9 Q. What About All Those Scary Statistics and Studies?

A. Most were prepared as scare tactics for the government by Dr. Gabriel Nahas, and were so biased and unscientific that Nahas was fired by the National Institute of Health [16] and finally renounced his own studies as meaningless [17]. For one experiment, he suffocated monkeys for five minutes at a time, using proportionately more smoke than the average user inhales in an entire lifetime [18]. The other studies that claim sensational health risks are also suspect, since they lack controls and produce results which cannot be replicated or independently verified [19].

#### 10 Q. What Can I Do About Marijuana?

A. No independent government panel that has studied marijuana has ever recommended jail for users [20]. Concerned persons should therefore ask their legislators to re-legalize and tax this plant, subject to age limits and regulations similar to those on alcohol and tobacco.

For More Information, Write:

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#### Footnotes

1. The same plant, known as hemp, has an estimated 50,000 non-drug commercial uses including paper, textiles, fuels, food and sealants, but these uses are also banned by existing laws. Sources: Encyclopedia Britannica, federal documents

and historical records.

2. Coptic Christians, Rhastafarians [sic], Shintos, Hinus, Buddhists, Sufis, Essenes, Zoroastrians, Bantus, and many other sects have traditions that consider the plant to have religious value.

3. Their personal correspondence and records reveal that U.S. Presidents Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and others smoked hashish, as did Benjamin Franklin and Mary Todd Lincoln. President John F. Kennedy is also reported to have smoked marijuana to relieve his back pain. Many of America's greatest leaders and Founding Fathers (including George Washington) were hemp farmers.

Sources: National Archives, published reports.

4. Archeologists report that cannabis was possibly the first plant cultivated by humans - about 8000 B.C. - and was used for linen, paper, and garments. Source: Columbia University, History of the World. It was being smoked in China and India as early as 2700 B.C.

5. Turkish smoking parlors were popular in both Europe and America. as well as the Middle and Far East, as recently as the turn of the Century.

6. The exhaustive Indian Hemp "Raj" Commission report (1986) by British authorities found no reason to restrict its use. But the notorious yellow journalist William Randolph Hearst fabricated and published horror stories about marijuana that were eventually investigated and shown to be lies, but not until long after the marijuana prohibition was enacted in 1938. Source: Larry Sloman, Reefer Madness.

7. Laws against marijuana were passed a year after the invention of a machine to harvest and process hemp so it could compete commercially against businesses owned by Hearst, the DuPonts and other powerful families. Source: Jack Herer, The Emperor Wears No Clothes.

8. Marijuana does not lead to physical dependency. Costa Rican Study, 1980; Jamaican Study, 1975; Nixon Blue Ribbon Report, 1972, et. al.

9. Source: Psychology Today, Newsweek, et.al.

10. Source: All university medical studies: UCLA, Harvard, Temple, etc.

11. Costa Rican Study, 1980; Jamaican Study, 1975; "The legal drugs for adults, such as alcohol and tobacco...precede the use of all illicit drugs." Source: National Academy of Sciences.

12. The FBI reports that 65-75% of criminal violence is alcohol related. "Pacifist syndrome" testimony was given by Federal Bureau of Narcotics Director Harry Anslinger before Congress (1948). However, the "Siler" Study conducted by the U.S in Panama (1931) reported "no impairment" in military personnel who smoked marijuana while off duty.

13. "The only clinically significant medical problem is that scientifically linked to marijuana is bronchitis. Like smoking tobacco, the treatment is the same: stop smoking." Source: Dr. Fred Oerther, M.D.

14. Coptic study (UCLA), 1981; "There is not yet any conclusive evidence as to whether prolonged use of marijuana causes permanent changes in the nervous system or sustained impairment of brain function and behavior in human beings." Source: National Academy of Sciences.

15. Source: Dr. Tod Mikuriya, Marijuana Medical Papers. Marijuana could replace at least 10-20% of prescribed drugs now in use. Source: Dr. Raphael Mechoulam. Marijuana was a major active ingredient in 40-50% of patent medicines before its ban.

16. 1976

17. 1983

18. The U.S. Government reports that the oral dose of cannabis required to kill a mouse is about 40,000 times the dose required to produce symptoms of intoxication in man. Source: Lowe, *Journal of Pharmacological and Experimental Therapeutics*, Oct. 1946.

19. In another famous study, Heath/Tulane (1974), wild monkeys were brutally captured, then virtually suffocated in marijuana smoke over a period of 90 days. Source: National Institute of Health.

20. Examples: the "LaGuardia" Committee Report (New York, 1944) and President Richard Nixon's Blue Ribbon "Shafer" Commission (1972). 21.