

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

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Marijuana causes many problems

It's worse for your health than many people think.

- Marijuana causes attention, memory and learning problems.
- Children and teens who use marijuana are at risk for brain damage and other drug-related problems.
- Marijuana can cause or worsen depression and other illnesses.
- Marijuana robs people of their motivation and energy to get things done.
- Marijuana today can be a lot stronger than it was 30 years ago.
- Like other illegal drugs, marijuana may be “cut” (mixed) with other drugs or substances without you knowing it. Sometimes these “cuts” are dangerous and make people sick.

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.



Marijuana is illegal

New York State drug laws are among the strictest in the country.

- The medical use of marijuana is not permitted in this state.
- Penalties for possessing even small amounts are high. You can be arrested, fined, even sent to jail.
- Penalties for selling are even more severe.
- Penalties for driving under the influence of marijuana are the same as for drunk driving.
- Marijuana will show up on a drug test even days after you used.
- A marijuana 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 stopping** or cutting down, even when using interferes with work, school or relationships, or causes money or legal problems.
- **Loss of energy or motivation** – having a hard time meeting responsibilities or getting things done: waking up in the morning; getting to work or school on time; finishing projects; completing plans; following through on ideas.
- **Depression** – feeling sad, irritable or hopeless much of the time, especially when you can't use.
- **Memory problems** – forgetting all or part of what happens when you use, or having trouble paying attention, staying focused or learning new information.
- **Preoccupation** – thinking a lot about getting and using marijuana. Neglecting family, friends, work and school.



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 and the problems your drug use is causing.
- Self-help organizations, such as 12-step programs with regular meetings, can be very useful.

More Information and Help

- **NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene:** nyc.gov/health or call 311 and ask for **Marijuana**
- **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
- **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
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration:** www.oas.samhsa.gov/marijuana.htm
- **Marijuana Anonymous:** www.ma-newyork.org or call 212-459-4423

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311**

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