

Marijuana Facts:

Marijuana is the most widely used illegal drug in the u.s. statistics have shown it is the number one drug of choice for teenagers.

Physical and psychological effects

When marijuana enters into the bloodstream, it acts on the brain and nervous system. Marijuana alters perception of reality, distorting the way the user's senses work, as well as distorting the user's sense of time, space, and self. Even after just one use, marijuana chemicals can be seen in the brain 3 to 6 weeks later and can be detected in a drug screening.

Regular use of marijuana can cause a person to use more and more of the drug to achieve the same effect. At continuous high dosages, some people become dependent on it. When they stop using it, they may experience withdrawal symptoms, such as difficulty sleeping, nervousness, and changes in temperament.

Physical risks

- Infertility
- Induces premature babies
- Causes birth defects in unborn children whose mothers use marijuana during pregnancy; several studies also cite genetic birth defects related to the father
- Increased heart rate - causing potential cardiac problems for people with heart conditions
- Can cause lung cancer, chronic bronchitis, asthma
- Affects immune system
- Reduces resistance levels to disease and illness
- Decrease in sexual pleasure

Social risks

- Psychological dependency may cause neglect of other important needs
- Relationship with family, friends, employers, and employees may suffer
- Interferes with ability to learn and make good decisions
- Quality of school work and job performance may suffer

Mental health and behavior risks

- Short-term memory & mood swings
- Impaired reaction time
- Insomnia & irritability
- Depression & anxiety
- Paranoia
- Frustration , confusion

Legal risks

Possession of marijuana is illegal in all 50 states. It will lead to arrest, fines and jail terms.

Heroin Facts:

Made from the white, milky liquid exuded from the opium poppy, heroin is a powerful and dangerous drug which is often injected directly into the bloodstream with a needle. When injected, heroin reaches the brain in just 7 or 8 seconds. Using heroin for even a short time can create physical and psychological dependence. In large doses, heroin can cause breathing to become shallow or to stop all together.

Physical and psychological effects

The addiction to heroin is a difficult one to break, even when it is destroying the user's health and life. The intense craving for heroin can be both physical and mental. For the user, it becomes a way of life. Every day centers around getting and using heroin.

After continued use, more and more heroin is needed to achieve the same effects. This results in a very costly habit. Once addicted, a user must have heroin every 8 to 12 hours. Withdrawal symptoms include fevers, chills, nausea, aching, diarrhea and muscle spasms. Most symptoms last for 3 to 5 days.

Physical risks

- Sleepiness
- Skin sores / abscesses , severe bleeding
- Slow breathing
- Collapsed veins or heart damage
- Loss of appetite & constipation , malnutrition
- Pregnant users may risk still birth, miscarriage
- Loss of sexual desire
- Aids (through shared needles)
- Anemia
- Death by overdose

Social risks

- Family life suffers
- School performance and work performance declines
- Dependency may cause neglect of other important needs

Mental health and behavior risks

- Extreme mood swings & depression
- Poor concentration
- Secretive behavior

Legal risks

Unlike some similar drugs, heroin is considered too dangerous even for medical use. Using or selling heroin is against the law. Offenders usually go to jail.

Cocaine Facts:

Cocaine is a highly addictive, potent drug that is made from the leaves of the coca plant. This powerful substance is capable of destroying personal relationships, creating serious legal problems, draining bank accounts, ruining careers, threatening health and claiming lives.

Physical and psychological effects

Psychologically, cocaine users can quickly become trapped in a vicious cycle. The drug produces short-term euphoria; for about 30 minutes, the user feels energetic, sociable, confident, and happy. Addiction creates a physical compulsion to use more cocaine to seek this euphoric high. At the same time, users become dependent on the drug to avoid the consequences of withdrawal, which include depression and paranoia. Chronic use of cocaine creates further problems that may include hallucinations. People who inject the drug may experience "coke bugs", a sensation that insects or snakes are crawling under their skin. Chronic use can also cause a serious break with reality. Users may become paranoid, imagining that others are out to get them.

Personal and social problems from cocaine use are innumerable, but often include participating in illegal activities to obtain the drug, stealing from friends and family to support the addiction, and job and career problems due to the high cost of chemical dependency to cocaine.

Most people use cocaine the first time out of curiosity. So-called "recreational users" usually start off by restricting their use of the drug to social settings. For example, some people use cocaine because they think it helps them overcome depression, lose weight, or enjoy a particular activity more. No matter how or why cocaine is used, it is always dangerous!

Physical risks

- Insomnia
- Fever
- Fatigue
- Impotency
- Fast heart rate
- Constipation
- Nausea
- Nasal stuffiness
- Weight loss
- Headaches
- Rapid breathing
- Seizures
- Difficulty urinating
- Death by overdose
- Birth defects (can result from use by either woman or man)

Social risks

- Negative change in personality

- Relationships suffer
- The loss of money
- Affects school work and job performance

Mental health and behavior risks

- Depression
- Poor concentration
- Intense anxiety
- Tendency to lie
- Confusion
- Withdrawal from normal activities
- Hallucinations
- Paranoia
- Irritability
- Attention deficits
- Listlessness

Legal risks

- Cocaine is illegal in all states. A cocaine indictment, not only a conviction, could ruin an individual's professional and personal life.

Crack Facts:

Crack provides an intense high almost instantly - in as little as 4 to 6 seconds - but it lasts only 5 to 7 minutes. The high is always followed by a low, so unpleasant that the user will do almost anything to acquire more crack.

Physical and psychological effects

Crack is almost instantly addicting. The social consequences of crack use include personal, social, legal, financial, and other problems. Most crack users are also addicted to alcohol, tranquilizers and other drugs, which they use to relieve the unpleasant side effects of crack.

Crack stimulates the central nervous system, which can have dangerous- even deadly- effects on the body. The vapors from heated crack are absorbed through the lungs and reach the brain within seconds. Crack can cause the respiratory system to fail. Often, crack users ignore health problems because crack dulls the pain, and users may ignore conditions that require medical attention. Crack can overpower the mind and the body. Users become trapped in a vicious cycle of addiction. During this cycle they experience euphoria, followed by a strong craving for more crack to overcome the deep depression and paranoia that accompanies withdrawal. Users usually repeat this cycle until their wallet and/or body give out.

Physical risks

- Chest pains
- Runny nose
- Nasal burns and sores
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- Cold sweats, tremors
- Severe weight loss
- Insomnia
- Neglect of personal hygiene
- Death by overdose
- Birth defects
- Social risk
- Suspicion of friends, loved ones, co-workers
- Neglected work
- Mental health and behavior risks
- Confusion, anxiety, depression, irritability, short temper
- Loss of interest in food and sex
- Restlessness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Weakness
- Aggression
- Panic attacks/violence

Legal risk

Crack is an illegal substance. If caught using or selling it, you could face fines and jail time.

Tranquilizer Facts:

Tranquilizers are used primarily to reduce anxiety and tension. They slow down the central nervous system. Most "minor" tranquilizers, including well-known trade names such as valium and librium, are usually taken orally as tablets, capsules, or liquids. Occasionally they are injected for both medical and non-medical purposes.

Physical and psychological effects

Tolerance and physical and psychological dependence can develop with long-term use. With the normal dosage an individual usually feels relaxed, has a sense of well-being, and may lose their inhibitions. As the dosage increases, the individual feels more sedated and may have a sense of floating. With regular use, tolerance can develop. The user then needs to take increased doses to get the desired effect. While many people take tranquilizers for legitimate medical purposes, the concern is about the person who uses tranquilizers to cope with routine stress on a daily basis. In this case, the greatest danger of dependence is a strong physical addiction.

Physical risks

- Drowsiness
- Loss of muscle coordination
- Lethargy
- Low blood pressure
- Birth defects
- Overdoses can cause:
 - Respiratory arrest
 - Convulsions
 - Death or coma

Social risks

- School and work performance may suffer
- Family and relationship problems
- Personality changes

Mental health and behavior risks

- Disorientation
- Memory impairment
- Weakened emotional control & rage
- Distortion of reality
- Reduced awareness
- Impaired perception

Legal risks

Most minor tranquilizers fall into class iv of the controlled substances act. The more powerful sedative- hypnotics are in class iii. Harsh penalties are applied for trafficking and illegal use of tranquilizers.

Alcohol Facts:

Alcohol is a powerful depressant drug that slows down thinking and reaction time, as well as other activity of the brain and spinal cord. Alcohol rapidly enters the bloodstream and circulates to all parts of the body within a few minutes. When it reaches the brain it knocks out control centers, causing intoxication.

What causes alcoholism?

Alcoholism is a disease characterized by the uncontrolled use of alcohol. Experts believe that genetic factors make certain people more vulnerable to alcoholism. Environmental, cultural, and psychological factors can also contribute to the development of the disease.

Physical and psychological effects

People who have a problem with alcohol drink to escape problems or turn off painful feelings of loneliness, insecurity, guilt, etc. But rather than solving them, alcohol only makes the problems worse.

Even small amounts of alcohol can reduce coordination, slow reflexes and lead to over-confidence. Alcohol can also lead to violence, poor judgment, job loss, and trouble with the law. The heavy costs of alcohol abuse include highway deaths, teenage death, spousal abuse, suicide, crime, arrests, and financial problems, in addition to broken families, abused children, ruined careers and lives cut short.

Physical risks

- Malnutrition
- "dts" - the shakes, tremors
- Brain damage
- Cancer of the mouth, esophagus, stomach
- Heart disease
- Liver damage
- Ulcers and gastritis
- Damage to adrenal and pituitary glands
- Birth defects caused by alcohol consumption during pregnancy

Social risks

- Family and relationship problems
- Problems at work or in school
- Use of alcohol to escape problems
- Decrease in participation in non-alcohol related activities

Mental health and behavior risks

- Erratic behavior
- Impaired thinking and judgment
- Slower reactions
- Loss of control over actions

- Moodiness
- Slurred speech
- Double vision
- Impaired memory
- Depression

Legal risks

Regardless of age, driving while intoxicated is a criminal offense. If stopped for drunk driving, you can be arrested, get a suspended license, jail sentence, fine, and/or mandatory attendance at alcohol education classes. Beyond legal ramifications there is an increase in auto insurance rates, inconvenience, and embarrassment. Drinking and driving can be a very costly mistake.

Hallucinogens Facts:

Hallucinogens are natural and synthetic drugs that distort thinking, awareness and the senses. This group of drugs includes lsd (lysergic acid diethylamide), pcp (phencyclidine, also known as "angel dust"), psilocybin (found in different types of mushrooms), and mescaline, among others. Many of the newer "designer drugs", such as ecstasy, are hallucinogens produced in illegal labs.

Physical and psychological effects

Hallucinogens can be extremely dangerous for both the user and other people around the user. Even a single dose can cause severe and complex reactions. Effects may include euphoria, loss of ability to separate fact and fantasy, paranoia, panic and violence. Because hallucinogens affect judgment so powerfully, using them can result in accidents such as falls and car crashes, as well as suicide attempts.

Some users of hallucinogens experience a serious break with reality that requires long-term professional treatment. Using these drugs even once can cause "flashbacks" - an unexpected recurrence of a hallucinogen's effects. These flashbacks can happen even years after the drug is taken, and can lead to depression or a fear of going insane.

Physical risks

- Heart damage
- Nausea
- Chills
- Dizziness
- Convulsions
- Extreme sweating
- Increased risk of birth defects in user's children

Social risks

- Problems with family/friends
- School/job problems
- Mental health and behavior risks
- Extreme mood swings
- Feeling different emotions simultaneously
- Severe anxiety or panic
- Impaired judgment/inability to recognize danger
- Distortions of objects, sounds, smells, body image, etc.
- Deep depression
- Fear of insanity or death

Legal risks

Hallucinogens are illegal drugs with no medical use. All users risk arrests, fines and jail terms. Using hallucinogens may cause the user to commit violent crimes.

Inhalant Facts:

Inhalants are chemical products that are misused to give the user a drug-like effect. Most inhalants are common household products, such as paint, varnish, glue, kerosene, nail polish remover and various aerosol products. Inhalants are poisonous and can cause lasting physical damage.

Physical and psychological effects

Inhalants slow down the body's reactions and distort the thinking process. They pass through the lungs and quickly enter the bloodstream. Chemicals from inhalants reach the brain within seconds. The effects last only a few moments and, when they wear off, the user may be irritable and depressed. Users of inhalants say they make them feel less inhibited. The effects are similar to those produced by alcohol and other sedatives. High dosages can produce laughing, feelings of floating, dizziness, time and space distortions, and illusions. These effects can last from 5 minutes to an hour, depending on the substance used and the amount.

Physical risks

- Double vision
- Loss of coordination
- Weakness
- Severe headaches
- Nausea or vomiting
- Numbness
- Irregular heartbeat
- Heart problems
- Even death - prolonged use of inhalants can kill brain cells, shut down liver and kidneys, and damage bone marrow

Social risks

- Quality of school work may suffer
- Loss of friends
- Athletic abilities decline

Mental health and behavior risks

- Impaired judgment
- Confusion & irritation
- Hyperactivity
- Acute psychosis & fright
- Increase in aggressive/violent behavior

Legal risks

There are laws attempting to regulate inhalants. Depending on state and local laws, and the type of inhalant used, a user may risk a fine and jail terms.