

# MARIJUANA

## Other names:

weed, pot, reefer, grass, dope, ganja, mary jane, sinsemilla, hash, herb, Aunt Mary, skunk, boom, kif, gangster, 420, chronic, blunt

## How it is used:

usually smoked and sometimes eaten

## What it looks like:

marijuana looks like dried parsley, with stems and /or seeds which are rolled into cigarettes

Marijuana is a green or gray mixture of dried, shredded flowers and leaves of the hemp plant (*Cannabis sativa*). It is the most often used illegal drug in this country.

Most users roll loose marijuana into a cigarette (called a "joint"). The drug can also be smoked in a water pipe, called a "bong". Some users mix marijuana into foods or use it to brew a tea. Hash users either smoke the drug in a pipe or mix it with tobacco and smoke it as a cigarette.

Marijuana can also be inserted into cigars. The cigars are sliced open and the tobacco is replaced with marijuana, making what's called a "blunt". This allows the marijuana to burn slower and longer.

**What it Does:** All forms of cannabis are mind-altering (psychoactive) drugs; they all contain THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol), the main active chemical in marijuana. There are about 400 chemicals in a cannabis plant, but THC is the one that affects the brain the most.

Because marijuana users often inhale the unfiltered smoke deeply and then hold it in their lungs as long as possible, marijuana is damaging to the lungs and pulmonary system. Marijuana smoke contains some of the same carcinogens and toxic particulates as tobacco, sometimes in higher concentrations. Long-term users of cannabis may develop psychological dependence and require more of the drug to get the same effect. The drug can become the center of their lives.

## Effects on the mind and body:

- increased heart rate
- bloodshot eyes
- dry mouth and throat
- impaired or reduced short-term memory
- impaired or reduced comprehension
- altered sense of time
- reduced ability to perform tasks requiring concentration and coordination, such as driving a car
- altered motivation and cognition, making the acquisition of new information difficult
- paranoia
- psychological dependence
- impairments in learning and memory, perception, and judgement - difficulty speaking, listening effectively, thinking, retaining knowledge, problem solving, and forming concepts
- intense anxiety or panic attacks

## Support Groups in Lancaster County:

Alcoholics Anonymous (717) 394-3238  
Narcotics Anonymous (717) 393-4546  
Al-Anon (for family & friends) (877) 298-5027



630 Janet Avenue Lancaster, PA 17601  
(717) 299-2831 [www.compassmark.org](http://www.compassmark.org)