

TOP 5 REASONS TEENS SMOKE

MARIJUANA

#1

It's natural

- Yes, marijuana grows naturally but so do opium and other drugs.
- In fact, many plants are grown naturally but it doesn't mean that they are good for you.
- Marijuana is now being cultivated to contain up to 6 times the tetrahydrocannabinol or THC levels (the active chemical in marijuana) than in the 60's when it became popular.
- With this increase in potency, it causes more adverse reactions, more side effects, more impaired driving, and greater changes in your biochemistry and brain cells.

#2

It relieves my stress

- One of the effects of marijuana is that it gives the temporary feeling that your stress is gone. This is because the THC triggers the brain cells to release the chemical dopamine, which creates good feelings or a 'high' for a short time.
- Smoking marijuana does not relieve stress; it only covers it for a short time. The stressful issue or situation will be waiting for you when you come off the high. It's better to deal with it now rather than later.
- Also, when a teenager self-medicates, it can disrupt that person's ability to learn how to deal with stressful situations in life.

#3

It's better than cigarettes

- This statement is not true! People who use marijuana are at risk of injuring their lungs through exposure to irritants and carcinogens found in marijuana smoke.
- Marijuana smoke contains 50% - 70% more carcinogenic hydrocarbons than tobacco smoke and three to ten times the resinous tars as tobacco smoke.
- When marijuana smoke is inhaled deeply and held in the lungs, the toxic effects are increased as a result.
- Marijuana users have some of the same breathing problems as tobacco smokers and are susceptible to possible long term physical effects, including cancer.

#4

It's going to be legalized anyway, right?

- As we've seen with cigarettes and alcohol, having something legalized doesn't eliminate the dangers and the consequences of its use.
- The reality is for most people, the short term effects of marijuana include problems with memory and learning; distorted perceptions (sight, sound, time, and touch); difficulties with thinking and problem-solving; loss of coordination; a decrease in motivation; increased heart rate; and impaired judgment. Not to mention the long term health issues like breathing problems, pneumonia or a weakened immune system.
- Marijuana, whether legal or not, still has the same negative physical and psychological affects on the user.

#5

It's not addictive

- Many people don't think of marijuana as addictive – they are wrong. The majority of youth (approx. 70%) ages 17 or younger enter drug abuse treatment reporting marijuana as their primary drug abused.
- Especially with youth, using marijuana for stress relief or self medication can lead to a psychological addiction where the user trains their brain that the way to deal with stress or pain is to get 'high'.
- The continued pursuit of the 'high' can easily lead to a physical or psychological addiction.