

Effects of Eating Marijuana

Short-Term Effects

The short-term effects of marijuana include:

- [Distorted perception](#) (sights, sounds, time, touch)
- Problems with [memory](#) and [learning](#)
- Loss of coordination
- Trouble with thinking and [problem-solving](#)
- [Increased heart rate](#), reduced blood pressure



Sometimes marijuana use can also produce anxiety, fear, distrust, or panic.

Long-Term Effects

Long-term cannabis use can have many effects on an individual:

Brain: Impaired concentration, memory and learning ability.

Hormones: Cannabis can affect hormone production. Research shows that some cannabis users have a lower sex drive. Irregular menstrual cycles and lower sperm counts have also been reported.

Immune system: There is some concern that cannabis smoking may impair the functioning of the immune system.

Mental health: Cannabis use, especially heavy and regular use, may be linked to a condition known as a “drug-induced psychosis” or “cannabis psychosis.”

There is some evidence that regular cannabis use increases the likelihood of psychotic symptoms in people who are already vulnerable due to a personal or family history of mental illness. Cannabis also appears to make psychotic symptoms worse for people with schizophrenia, and using cannabis can lower the chances of recovery from a psychotic episode.

Effects on the regulatory system in the brain

Making a habit of smoking or ingesting marijuana can be disastrous for the brain. The drug affects the chemical balance in the regulatory system and the pleasure center of the brain. This imbalance in turn makes adaptation to changes slower and starts affecting things like memory and learning ability.

Depression

Depression is also another common symptom that comes with the use of marijuana. This symptom is a vicious cycle as the person soon finds him or herself using the drug to get rid of the depression that has been caused by the drug in the first place.

Withdrawal and obsessiveness

Marijuana users also suffer from severe withdrawal symptoms when the drug is not accessible to them. They often have cravings that are uncontrollable, and these can lead to damaging results.

Physical problems

Just as it affects the brain, smoking marijuana can also have dire effects on a person's motor abilities like breathing. Constant use of the drug increases the breathing, heart, and blood rate, thus leading to taxing of the body. This in turn leads to speeding up of aging and hence increases the risks of cancer of the lungs, strokes, and heart attacks.

Effect on male hormonal system

Since marijuana affects the chemical center of the brain, it plays havoc with the [hormone levels](#) in the body. In men, it decreases the level of testosterone. This could sometimes lead to the enlarging of breasts.

Effects on the female hormonal system

Marijuana has the opposite effect on the female hormonal system. If it decreases the testosterone levels in men, then it increases it in women. This leads to irregular menstrual cycles. However, this condition can be reversed.

Reproduction in men and marijuana abuse

Apart from affecting the hormones, marijuana also has an adverse effect on the sperm in a man. Usage of this drug can lead to a low [sperm count](#) and an increase in the number of immature and abnormal sperm that is produced. Today marijuana is one of the main causes of infertility in males.

Reproduction in women and marijuana abuse

Marijuana can also play havoc with the female reproductive system. Besides irregular menstrual cycles it also hinders ovulation.

Pregnancy and the effects of marijuana

When a pregnant woman uses marijuana, they are at risk of having unhealthy babies. Babies born to women like these are generally smaller with birth weights that are much lower than average. The nervous system of these babies could also be highly affected; they begin to show signs of startles, tremors, and do not react normally to sound and light. They also tend to have cries that are high pitched.

Other common side effects

Among other side effects commonly experienced due to marijuana abuse are anxiety, irritability, anger, violent outbursts, insomnia, red eyes, and dry mouth.

Other Health Effects

Research indicates that THC impairs the body's immune system from fighting disease, which can cause a wide variety of health problems. One study found that marijuana actually inhibited the disease-preventing actions of key immune cells. Another study found that THC increased the risk of developing bacterial infections and tumors.

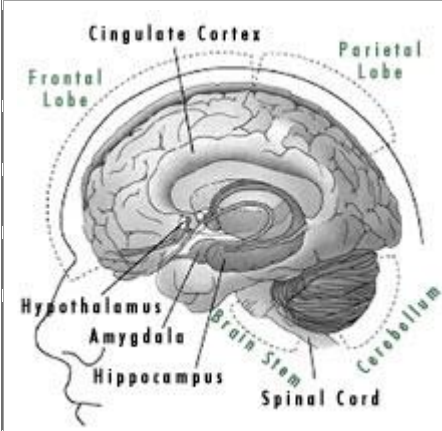
If you take it orally, you could be in for quite a ride. The liver metabolizes THC into 11-OH- Δ^9 -THC, a compound three times more psychoactive. Oral cannabis is a powerful, almost psychedelic experience – very uncomfortable if you're not expecting it. The effects are slower to come on (1 to 2 hours) and last considerably longer (around 4 hours).

Effects on the Brain

The active ingredient in marijuana, delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol or THC, acts on cannabinoid receptors on nerve cells and influences the activity of those cells. Some brain areas have many cannabinoid receptors, but other areas of the brain have few or none at all. Many cannabinoid receptors are found in the parts of the brain that influence pleasure, memory, thought, concentration, sensory and time perception, and coordinated movement.

When high doses of marijuana are used, usually when eaten in food rather than smoked, users can experience the following symptoms:

- [Hallucinations](#)
- [Delusions](#)
- [Impaired memory](#)
- [Disorientation](#)

Marijuana's Effects on the Brain		
	Brain Region	Functions Associated With Region
	Brain regions in which cannabinoid receptors are abundant	
	Cerebellum	Body movement coordination
	Learning and memory	
	Cerebral cortex, especially cingulate, frontal, and parietal regions	Higher cognitive functions
	Nucleus accumbens	Reward
	Basal ganglia	Movement control

When marijuana is smoked, its active ingredient (THC) travels throughout the body, including the brain, to produce its many effects. THC attaches to sites called cannabinoid receptors on nerve cells in the brain, affecting the way those cells work. Cannabinoid receptors are abundant in parts of the brain that regulate movement, coordination, learning and memory, higher cognitive functions such as judgment, and pleasure.	• Substantia nigra pars reticulata • Entopeduncular nucleus • Globus pallidus • Putamen	
	Brain regions in which cannabinoid receptors are moderately concentrated	
	Hypothalamus	Body housekeeping functions (body temperature regulation, salt and water balance, reproductive function)
	Amygdala	Emotional response, fear
	Spinal cord	Peripheral sensation, including pain
	Brain stem	Sleep and arousal, temperature regulation, motor control
	Central gray	Analgesia
	Nucleus of the solitary tract	Visceral sensation, nausea and vomiting