



Marijuana: Breaking Down the Buzz

Attitudes and laws are changing, but what does science have to say? And what can we learn from the history of cigarette smoking?

Some states now allow marijuana use for adults and people with certain medical conditions. You may be confused about how safe it is.

But the science shows: Smoking marijuana on a regular basis can harm the developing teen brain.

We have a lot to learn about marijuana's effects on health. But lessons from tobacco's past can tell us a good deal. Plus, knowing what scientists have learned about marijuana can help us break down the hype.

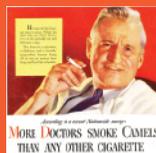
The Tale of Tobacco

In the 1920s, experts first linked smoking cigarettes to cancer. In 1957, the government's top doctor warned that cigarette smoking could cause lung cancer. Still, until the 1970s, nearly half of adults in the U.S. smoked.¹ Tobacco

Lessons From Tobacco: Back to the Future

If you want a clue how attitudes can change with facts, take a look at tobacco.

1913
First modern cigarette introduced.



1920s-50s
The height of tobacco advertising.



1914-18
Doctors claim cigarettes help wounded soldiers.

1920s-40s
Research links cancer to burned tobacco.

1957
The U.S. Surgeon General warns cigarette smoking can cause lung cancer.

More Info: For additional facts about the brain and drugs, visit scholastic.com/headsup and teens.drugabuse.gov.

smoke was everywhere, even in restaurants, airplanes, and theaters.

Because of mounting scientific evidence, limits were placed on smoking in public. But it took until the mid-1960s (40 years after the lung cancer link was discovered!) for smoking rates to drop. From 1965 to 2011, rates for adults dropped 55 percent.² For teens, from 1991 to 2011, the drop was 34 percent.³ This is an improvement. But 480,000 people in the U.S. still die every year from smoking or secondhand smoke.⁴ Tobacco, along with alcohol, is responsible for more drug-related diseases and deaths than all illegal drugs combined.⁵

Is Marijuana the Next Tobacco?

Legalizing marijuana could lead to more people using it. But its use may drop over time, as it did with tobacco, if people understand its harmful effects.

However, fewer young people now think marijuana is harmful than before.⁶ How harmful is it for teens?



SCIENTIFIC FACTS ABOUT MARIJUANA

► Brain Effects

- Long-term, regular use of marijuana—starting in the teen years—may impair brain development and lower IQ.⁷
- Judgment, focus, and memory can suffer for days after use, especially in regular users.⁸

► Addiction Risk

- The risk for marijuana addiction almost *doubles* for people who begin using as teens (16 percent vs. 9 percent).⁹ Daily use increases the risk for addiction—to about 25–50 percent.¹⁰
- Risk for addiction depends on a person's genes, surroundings, and age. The younger the starting age, the greater the chances of addiction.

► Life Effects

For teens, frequent use of marijuana is linked to higher dropout rates, poorer grades, and car crashes.¹¹

For adults, continued regular use is linked to unemployment and being less satisfied with life.¹²

► Other Drug Use

Teens who use marijuana are more likely to use other drugs. Experts don't yet know if this is due to changes to the brain caused by marijuana or if it's because marijuana smokers may hang out with people who use other drugs.

► Possible Increased Risk for Mental Disorders

Marijuana use in teens has been linked to depression, anxiety, and schizophrenia. It's not clear whether it directly causes the diseases.

HASH OIL ALERT The resin from the marijuana plant has three to five times more THC (the main active ingredient in marijuana) than the plant itself. Smoking it can be extremely dangerous.

Fire Warning: People have been burned in fires and explosions while trying to extract hash oil using lighter fluid.

1964

Surgeon General's Report on Smoking and Health is issued.

1964

70 million people in the U.S. spend a total of \$8 billion per year on cigarettes.

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking By Pregnant Women May Result in Fetal Injury, Premature Birth, And Low Birth Weight.

1960s–90s

- Warnings appear on cigarette packs.
- Cigarette ads are banned on TV and radio.
- Smoking is banned on U.S. commercial flights.



1998

Tobacco industry is fined \$206 billion for tobacco-related deaths and diseases.

2004–07

E-cigs (electronic cigarettes) are introduced worldwide.

2014

- Worldwide, tobacco kills 6 million people each year. 600,000 are nonsmokers who die from secondhand smoke.¹³
- Health officials urge limits and research on e-cigs.

More Info on Marijuana: <http://teens.drugabuse.gov/blog/mj>