



# Marijuana and Health

## Addiction

- 1 in 10 people who try marijuana will become addicted to it, developing a dependence that produces withdrawal, cravings.
- If marijuana use starts in adolescence, the chances of addiction are 1 in 6.i
- Long-term studies from the USA and New Zealand have shown that regular cannabis smokers report more symptoms of chronic bronchitis than non- smokers.ii
- And today's marijuana is not the marijuana of the 1960s; potency has tripled in the past 15 years, according to a 2009 report from the U.S. government. It has grown 5 times since 1960.
- In the U.S. since 1990, more people have gone to the emergency room after using marijuana even though the overall numbers of marijuana users has remained relatively stable.iii
- In the U.S., cannabis emergency rates have been rising sharply for cannabis-related admissions. Visits to hospital emergency departments because of cannabis use have risen from an estimated 16,251 visits in 1991 to more than 374,000 in 2008.iv

## The Brain and Mental Health

- Marijuana use directly affects the brain, specifically the parts of the brain responsible for memory, learning, attention, and reaction time. These effects can last up to 28 days after abstinence from the drug.v
- Science confirms that the adolescent brain, particularly the part of the brain that regulates the planning complex cognitive behavior, personality expression, decision-making and social behavior, is not fully developed until the early to mid-20s. Developing brains are especially susceptible to all of the negative effects of marijuana and other drug use.vi
- Marijuana use is significantly linked with mental illness, especially schizophrenia and psychosis, but also depression and anxiety.vii

## The Heart

- Marijuana use can cause an increase in the risk of a heart attack more than four-fold in the hour after use, and provokes chest pain in patients with heart disease.viii