SKUNK ALERT!

(aka Potent Pot)

BRAIN DAMAGE. PSYCHOSIS. ADDICTION.

What every person, politician, teacher, parent, and student should know about marijuana.

MARIJUANA IS NOT SAFER THAN ALCOHOL. Unlike alcohol which consists of one chemical that is excreted from the body in a matter of hours, marijuana is fat-soluble, one-half of which stays in the body and brain for a month, compounding with each additional joint; longer than any other drug. It consists of 483 chemicals that turn into over 2,000 when smoked, and 61 cannabinoids all of which are bioactive, and some are psychoactive. The main psychoactive drug is THC (delta 9 tetrahydrocannabinol). The THC content of marijuana has increased from ½ to 2% in the 60's and 70's to as high as 40% in smoked form, and up to 99% as wax or BHO (Butane Hemp Oil) used in dabbing, vaping and edibles. While alcohol in moderation may even be beneficial, as with a glass or two of wine, today's high potency pot, called Skunk, is primarily consumed just to get high, and with it are many serious harms to the body and brain.

MARIJUANA CAN CAUSE PERMANENT BRAIN DAMAGE physically altering the brain before it reaches full maturity at or above age 25. Marijuana reduces the amount of white and grey matter by as much as 80% and shrinks the hippocampus, the learning, cognition, and memory center of the brain causing a loss of 6 to 8 points of IQ by age 38. (NIDA) The damage is age and dose-related. The younger one starts and the more they use the greater the toxic effect on the brain. Quitting later doesn't reverse the damage. Adolescent marijuana use diminishes academic achievement, leads to more dropouts, less life satisfaction, and fewer opportunities for higher-paying jobs. Brain damage prior to brain maturity can have life-long adverse consequences.

MARIJUANA IS NOT MEDICINE While isolated components of the plant, like CBD, has been approved for certain illnesses, and marijuana has some value in suppressing vomiting and nausea and stimulating appetite in AIDs patients. But the whole plant is classified by the FDA as a Schedule I drug because it has no accepted medicinal use, has the potential for harm, and cannot be administered properly under supervision. Real medicines must have known compounds, potency, and dosage and be reproducible in a uniform manner (like pills). That isn't possible with smoke, and the consistency of marijuana plants varies widely, often with fungus and insecticides that are very harmful. The term "medical marijuana" was coined by people who want to legalize drugs to give it a good name as the first step toward full legalization. CBD, the component that can help offset the psychoactive effects of THC, has been largely bred out of today's marijuana because "patients" just want to get high.

MARIJUANA CAN CAUSE MENTAL ILLNESS In vulnerable individuals (about 30%) it has and is causing psychotic breaks leading to violent acts, mass murders and suicides, as well as other mental health disorders including schizophrenia, paranoia, anxiety, depression, and bipolar. The problem is people don't know they are vulnerable until they experience the problem, then it may be too late for some and a question of long-term recovery for others. Psychotic episodes have led to a dramatic increase in emergency room visits. Daily users are 5 times more likely to develop mental health disorders; weekend users 3 times more than non-users. A UK study showed that Skunk was responsible for 1/4th of the new cases of schizophrenia. Studies from Australia and New Zealand showed that teens who use marijuana were 7 times more likely to commit suicide. Marijuana is a major cause of the nation's crisis of mental health, and the fact suicides are now at record levels.

MARIJUANA IS ADDICTIVE One in six (17%) of adolescents who use marijuana will become addicted; one in eleven (9%) of those who start after age 18. Recovery from marijuana addiction is particularly difficult because it remains in the body for so long. Marijuana is a gateway to other drugs that kill by overdose, such as heroin, cocaine, and meth and fentanyl. Of 300 Americans who die every day of a drug overdose, the vast majority started their drug journey with pot. Addiction and mental health are the primary cause of the homeless problem. Marijuana is harmful to users, and those who use are a threat to others.

MARIJUANA CAN KILL OR PERMANENTLY HARM A FETUS Today's high potency pot can cause fatal brain damage to a fetus only two weeks after conception before the mother even knows she is pregnant. (*Psychoses,* U of Texas) Research from forty years ago at the UC Davis Primate Center showed an increase in stillbirths from 12% normal to 44%. Babies that survived childbirth often had physical deformities and brain alterations that altered behavior and caused learning deficits well into the teens. Babies of mothers who smoked pot during pregnancy had an 11-fold increase in Non-Lymphoblastic leukemia. Young people approaching or in their child-bearing years should be acutely aware that marijuana use by either parent prior to or at conception, during pregnancy, and/or when breastfeeding can directly affect a baby when they are most vulnerable.

MARIJUANA CAUSES HEALTH PROBLEMS INCLUDING CANCER Marijuana can cause cancer of the head, neck, bladder, brain and testis. It can cause chronic bronchitis and other respiratory problems and elevates the risk of heart attack by 4.8 times within 1 to 3 hours after smoking. Studies in the UK show that it is a major cause of strokes as well. It affects the pituitary gland, a pea size structure at the base of the brain that is the control center for sex and reproductive hormones and in turn, sexual dysfunction. Studies done in the 70s showed that marijuana caused more DNA damage than even heroin (Dr.*Miroshima*), resulting in mutations to sperm and chromosomal abnormalities that can adversely affect future generations. The modern craze of vaping is causing lung damage and death, and hyperemesis (i.e., *scromitting*) where one screams and vomits concurrently, sometimes for days. Studies show it is a cause of autism as well.

MARIJUANA DOUBLES THE RISK OF TRAFFIC DEATHS Traffic deaths have doubled where marijuana has been legalized. In a Maryland Trauma Center, 27% of injured drivers tested positive for pot. 50% of drivers under 21 tested positive for pot compared to only 33% for alcohol. Intoxication from either alcohol or marijuana is a major cause of injury in traffic accidents; mixing the two is particularly dangerous. Traffic accidents are the leading cause of death in teenagers. Because marijuana stays in one's system for a month compounding with additional use, 1 in 4.5 drivers are impaired to some degree with impaired judgment and reaction time. Because pot-impaired drivers fixate on an object and drive to it, people aren't even safe on the sidewalk or side of the road.

MARIJUANA VAPING IS PARTICULARLY DANGEROUS Vaping is a major cause of health problems causing serious lung injuries and death. Vitamin E Acetate, added to THC for vaping, is extremely harmful. Vaping causes lung and organ damage, breathing problems, addiction and more. Experts say just don't vape.

MARIJUANA USERS CAN BE A THREAT TO OTHERS.

With rare exception, every mass shooter has suffered from marijuana induced psychosis. Marijuana causes a break from reality where people don't know who they are, or where they are. Voices tell them to kill, or kill themselves. In numerous cases, in an altered state, people have killed and decapitated loved ones. Mothers have killed their own children. Use caution if a marijuana user starts showing signs of aggression.

www.TBAC.us

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE HARMS OF MARIJUANA

www.drugabuse.gov/publications
www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp
www.drugfree.org

NIDA/NIH.gov

https://AALM.info