

# The Power of Parents

## Marijuana



*"A child who gets through age 21 without smoking, using illegal drugs or abusing alcohol is virtually certain never to do so."<sup>5</sup>*

### Did you know...

- Use of marijuana is linked with lower grades in school, and a reduced chance of graduation.<sup>1</sup>
- Adolescent-onset use of marijuana is associated with a significant and permanent decrease in IQ.<sup>2</sup>
- Use of marijuana during adolescence is associated with mental illness.<sup>3</sup>
- Research has shown that marijuana's negative effects on attention, memory, and learning can last for days or weeks after the acute effects of the drug wear off.<sup>3</sup>
- Persistent use of marijuana before the age of 18 can lead to lasting mental deficits in attention and memory.<sup>3</sup>
- Contrary to the belief that marijuana is not addictive, marijuana use can lead to physical and social dependence.<sup>4</sup>
- Marijuana smoke has been shown to have 50% more carcinogens than tobacco smoke.<sup>4</sup>

### Warning Signs of Marijuana Use

- ◆ If you smell smoke on clothes or in teens bedroom
- ◆ Unexplained use of money
- ◆ Drop in motivation and participation in activities
- ◆ Possession of eye-drops or pipes or other drug paraphernalia
- ◆ Sudden change of friend group
- ◆ Possession of drug posters, stickers, or pins

Sources: <http://www.caron.org/signs-of-pot-use-5827.html>,

[www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org)

# Marijuana & The Brain

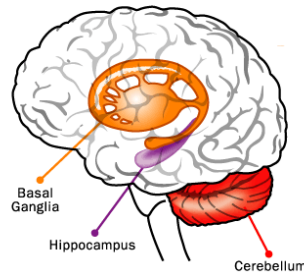
## Smoking Marijuana Can Make Driving Dangerous

THC, the main chemical in marijuana, affects the cerebellum's function and thereby impairs our abilities to do simple tasks that are involved in driv-

ing a car. THC affects the cerebellum, which is the part of our brain that controls balance and coordination. THC also affects the basal ganglia, another part of the brain that's involved in movement control. These effects lead to impaired judgment and coordination, slowed reaction times (e.g., hitting the brake in time), and problems reacting to signals or sounds, each of which is important while driving.

Source: NIDA- National Institute on Drug Abuse

Cannabinoid Receptor Sites



## Brain Changes With Drug Use:

Prolonged drug use changes the brain in fundamental and long-lasting ways. These long-lasting changes are a major component of the addiction itself. It is as though there is a figurative "switch" in the brain that "flips" at some point during an individual's drug use. The point at which this "flip" occurs varies from individual to individual, but the effect of this change is the transformation of a drug abuser to a drug addict.

Source: NIDA: NIDA for Teens- National Institute on Drug Abuse

## Effects on Learning and Memory:

The hippocampus is an area of the brain that serves a large role in learning and memory. It also has a high concentration of cannabinoid receptors. This means, that smoking marijuana can make you lose short term memories, and for those who use marijuana while their brain is still in development (before the mid-20's), it can lead to a drop in IQ and significant problems with both long and short term memory.

This publication is courtesy of the  
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