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after use.



■ Pot Luck

As it trucks around the bloodstream, THC does more than play tricks on the brain. It puts the body through a lot of changes, too—and they may last a lot longer than you might think.

That's because some of the chemicals in pot stay inside the body and brain long after drug effects wear off. In fact, some hang around for **weeks** after use.

Nobody's sure how big a deal that is, but we do know that some measurable problems have been noted in physical and mental skills as long as 24 hours after smoking.

Still, a lot is known about some *immediate* effects in the body, including increases in both heart rate and breathing.

And although these changes don't seem particularly risky for healthy people, they *can* be a bigger problem for those with heart or lung disease.

There may be even more problems in other parts of the body—the immune system, for example. Problems here could make it tougher to fight off colds and infections.

There are also changes in body chemicals called hormones, which direct how fast and how much your body changes and develops as you grow up.

And the latest news from the lungs seems even worse.

In fact, marijuana seems just as harmful to the lungs as tobacco. And for people who smoke pot **and** cigarettes, the chances of getting cancer later in life are higher, still.

Why did you think they called it getting **high**, anyway?



The Numbers Game

Percentage of 8th-graders who say they've smoked pot in the past month ...	6.5
Who haven't	93.5
10th-graders who report smoking pot during the past month	14.2
Who don't	85.8
H.S. seniors who admit smoking pot in the past month	18.3
Who say they haven't	81.7

(Source: U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services, 2007)



■ Sign Off

In spite of all the new facts we've bumped up against in preparing this report, one old fact about marijuana hasn't changed much, at all: It's still against the **law** in most places—especially at school.

When you add that to its other risks, you may just come to the same conclusion that millions of other people have come to: that pot's more of a risk than it's worth.

And while we still don't know everything there is to know about it (Heck, we don't know everything about **air** or **water**, for that matter), we know enough to safely say that a lot of people—including kids, pregnant women, and people with emotional problems—are better off as far away from it as possible.



That's the word from our sponsor that we promised a while back. Because the fact is you really **do** only have one body—and the healthier you keep it, the better it'll take care of you and the happier you'll be.

And when you stop and think about it, isn't happiness what it's all **supposed** to be about in the first place? ■

[Announcer: This concludes the broadcast day for The Mystery Channel and THC-TV. Thanks for watching. And now, to honor America, our national anthem...]



This is one in a series of publications on drugs, behavior, and health published by Do It Now Foundation. Please call or write for a list of current titles, or check out our web site at www.doitnow.org.



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Marijuana



► **Stuff You Might Not Know You Don't Know**

■ This just in...

Sometimes, all the talk about marijuana can start to sound like **old** news, or seem like a television rerun. And it's easy to think that you've heard it **all** before. That's where we come in — because this pamphlet *isn't* a rerun. It's more like a "This just in..." bulletin or a special report on one of the channels we usually channel-surf past on cable, or a really high-number UHF station on regular TV.

Call us **THC-TV**. Or the **Mystery Channel**.

Because it **does** take a lot of detective work to sort out the facts and the fictions about pot today. And it **is** a real mystery why so few people even bother to try.

In this program — er, pamphlet — we'll look closely at the latest facts about marijuana, and consider what those facts could mean for **you**.

Then, when we're finished, you'll be better able to make up your own mind about marijuana, and have a better idea what to do about it in your life. Because, like it or not, you *will* have to do something about it — one way or another, sooner or later, if you haven't had to choose already.

Sound fair? Cool.

So stick around. We'll be back after these words...

■ Meet Marijuana

Over the years, marijuana has made quite a name for itself — **several** of them, in fact.

It's been called everything from "killer weed" to plain old "weed," "pot," "grass," "bud," and "reefer."

Still, no matter what you call it, all the names and nicknames refer to the same thing: the flowering tops and leaves of a plant known scientifically as **cannabis**.

It grows naturally all over the world (except places like Death Valley and the North Pole), and it's been used for centuries to make everything from bird seed to rope.

But that's not the reason it's so well-known.

The reason that marijuana is so talked-about today (and the reason we're talking about it at all) is because it contains a mind-altering drug known as tetrahydrocannabinol, or **THC**.



Marijuana is like a little green **THC** factory, the only plant on earth that produces it — and at least 60 other chemicals found only in pot.



In fact, marijuana plants are like little green factories that churn out THC all day, every day.

And if they didn't, nothing else would.

Because THC is produced in only one place in all of nature: in the flowers and leaves of cannabis.

Still, just because THC is the chemical that causes most of the drug effects of marijuana, that doesn't mean it's the only one. In fact, marijuana smoke is made up of at least **421 different** chemicals.

Even scientists who study it full-time aren't sure of all the ways all those chemicals affect the mind and body. Still, they keep at it, anyway.

In the process, they've blown away a lot of the myths (and the smoke) that's swirled around marijuana for centuries.

And now that things are finally starting to clear, we're ready to move in for a closer look — **after** this break.

Just **don't** touch that dial!
(Or even this remote!) ▶

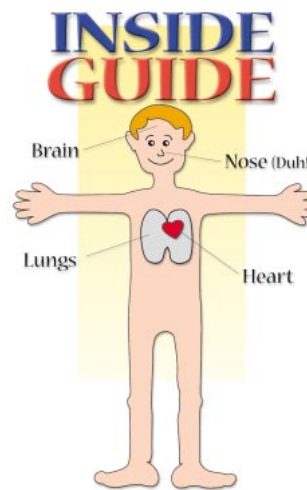


■ Tricks & THC

If you want to imagine THC in action, you have to start by thinking **small**.

That's the way it is, anyway, when it enters the body as

tiny particles in marijuana smoke, mixing with oxygen in the lungs, where tiny blood vessels (called capillaries) pull it into the bloodstream.



Physical potpourri. Although marijuana may trigger slight effects in all body systems, it produces its main effects in the brain — and its main risks to health in the lungs.

From there, THC gets shuttled to more places than a **Salesman-of-the-Year** with frequent-flyer miles — moving to every part of the body, doing different things in different places.

In the brain, THC hooks up with some of the electrochemical circuits that direct the way we think and feel.

Some people like these changes, but others — especially inexperienced users and older people — sometimes find being stoned confusing or scary.

Why? No one knows for sure. It probably has a lot to do with how fast THC goes to work and how different people experience and interpret all the effects it produces in *all* of the body systems it works on.

Still, there *are* universal effects, things that happen to everyone who smokes marijuana.

One effect that seems to hit everyone equally is a distorted sense of time perception.

Things that ordinarily seem to pass by in a couple of minutes may seem to take **hours**.

That may be one of the reasons why pot smokers sometimes find it hard to concentrate.

Memory is also affected, which means that doing even simple things, like following instructions (or the plot of a "Gilligan's Island" rerun on good old THC-TV), can start to seem **awfully** complicated.

And if remembering simple things gets complicated, just imagine how hard it gets remembering seriously **complex** stuff — like the answers to the exam or quiz you thought you studied for the night before.

No big deal, though, of course — not to the **serious** stoner, caught up in the throws of true, pot-assisted pretzel logic.

Because, hey — you know, even if you fail all your exams this year, you can still take them all over again next year.

True? **True?**

Hey, you gonna eat those chips? ▶



Munchie mania. One common (and often-unwanted) effect of marijuana is increased appetite, a condition known to users as "the munchies."

