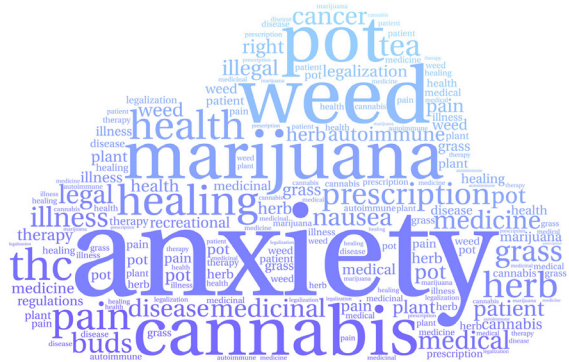


HOW DOES MARIJUANA EFFECT A PERSON'S LIFE?

Compared to those who don't use marijuana, those who frequently use large amounts report the following:

- lower life satisfaction
- poorer mental health
- poorer physical health
- more relationship problems

People also report less academic and career success. For example, marijuana use is linked to a higher likelihood of dropping out of school. It's also linked to more job absences, accidents, and injuries.



- Clare County**
789 North Clare Avenue
Harrison, MI 48625
989.539.2141
- Isabella County**
The George Rouman Center
301 South Crapo Street
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858
989.772.5938
- Gladwin County**
655 East Cedar Street
Gladwin, MI 48624
989.426.9295
- Mecosta County**
500 South Third Avenue
Big Rapids, MI 49307
231.796.5825
- Midland County**
218 Fast Ice Drive
Midland, MI 48642
989.631.2320
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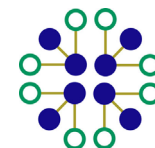


EFFECTS OF MARIJUANA ON MENTAL HEALTH

Individuals with anxiety disorders are more vulnerable to developing a dependence on marijuana. Researchers have discovered that people with anxiety disorders are more likely to use marijuana or have a marijuana use disorder than those without anxiety disorders. A marijuana use disorder can range in severity from harmful use, to dependence to addiction.

Some individuals may self-medicate with marijuana to alleviate the symptoms of an untreated mental illness. Large doses of marijuana can cause temporary psychotic episodes, characterized by delusions, hallucinations, and detachment from oneself.

**National Institute on Drug Abuse*



**Community
Mental Health**
FOR CENTRAL MICHIGAN

SELF-MEDICATING

Anytime you take it upon yourself to use a substance to treat or cope with a medical problem or symptom, it is referred to as self-medicating. Often, self-medicating produces an immediate relief of the uncomfortable symptoms, thereby reinforcing its use. The logic is simple: “Substance X makes me feel better when I’m anxious, so I will use it again as long as the risks and consequences are not too great.”

The problem with self-medication is that even though the use of marijuana is becoming more acceptable, not enough is known about the efficacy of the drug for particular medical conditions as well as its long-term consequences.

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HOW DOES MARIJUANA EFFECT THE BRAIN?

Marijuana has both short-term and long-term effects on the brain.

Short-Term Effects

When a person smokes marijuana, THC quickly passes from the lungs into the bloodstream. The blood carries the chemical to the brain and other organs throughout the body. The body absorbs THC more slowly when the person eats or drinks it. In that case, they generally feel the effects after 30 minutes to 1 hour.

Marijuana overactivates parts of the brain that contain the highest number of these receptors. This causes the “high” that people feel. Other effects include:

- altered senses
- altered sense of time
- changes in mood
- impaired body movement
- difficulty with thinking and problem-solving
- impaired memory
- hallucinations
- delusions (when taken in high doses)
- psychosis (when taken in high doses)

Long-Term Effects

Marijuana also affects brain development. When people begin using marijuana as teenagers, the drug may impair thinking, memory, and learning functions and affect how the brain builds connections between the areas necessary for these functions.

**National Institute on Drug Abuse*

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL SIDE EFFECTS

Physical Side Effects

Breathing Problems. Marijuana smoke irritates the lungs, and people who smoke marijuana frequently can have the same breathing problems as those who smoke tobacco.

Increased Heart Rate. Marijuana raises heart rate for up to three hours after smoking. This may lead to increased chance of heart attack.

Intense Nausea and Vomiting. Regular, long-term marijuana users can experience regular cycles of severe nausea, vomiting, and dehydration.

Mental Side Effects

Long-term marijuana use has been linked to mental illness in some people, such as:

- temporary hallucinations
- temporary paranoia
- worsening symptoms in patients with schizophrenia
- impaired thinking and memory
- difficulty with thinking and problem-solving

Marijuana use has also been linked to other mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts among teens. Multiple studies have shown that marijuana use in adolescence can be a contributing factor in triggering or worsening the symptoms of serious psychotic mental illnesses, most notably schizophrenia.