



Substance Use

Marijuana, hashish and other cannabis-containing substances

Do I have a problem - what is addiction to cannabis?

Marijuana is one of the most widely used drugs in America. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, about 9% of people who use marijuana become dependent on or addicted, and 30% of those who use marijuana experience emotional dependency. While marijuana addiction isn't associated with overdose death like other drugs, it can have serious side effects. Someone who smokes marijuana daily may be functioning at a reduced intellectual level most or all of the time.

What are marijuana, hashish and other cannabis substances and how do they affect you?

Cannabis often precedes or is used along with other more dangerous mood-altering substances. People who use cannabis regularly have a much higher propensity for developing dependence, using other drugs, and attempting suicide.

Signs and symptoms of use and dependence include:

- A sense of euphoria or feeling "high"
- Red eyes and dry mouth
- A heightened sense of visual, auditory and taste
- Exaggerated cravings for certain foods
- Increased blood pressure and heart rate
- Decreased coordination
- Difficulty concentrating or remembering
- Slowed reaction time
- Decreased mental sharpness
- Stunted emotional maturity
- Anxiety, fear, distrust, or paranoia
- Social isolation

Complications of dependency include:

- Multiple short-term and long-term mental and physical health problems
- Physical changes to some nerve cells (neurons) in your brain
- Memory problems and overall IQ reduction
- Engaging in dangerous behavior
- Marital and family problems
- Failing to fulfill obligations or put others at risk at work or home
- Legal issues and financial problems

Where can you turn for support?

In addition to a health care professional, you can seek support from a trusted friend, colleague or family member. Your union or HR rep can provide referrals, including financial resources. National and local resources are available to both the individual and to those offering support, and include:

- SAMHSA Substance Use Treatment Locator – <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-treatment> – 1-800-662-4357
- Entertainment Industry Therapist Finder – btshelp.org/findatherapist

You can find links to self diagnostic tools at btshelp.org/substanceuse