

WHAT'S THE REAL STORY?

TEENAGERS WANT THE TRUTH ABOUT MARIJUANA

★ MOST TEENAGERS ALREADY KNOW THAT:

- Marijuana (pot) is illegal
- Marijuana comes from the dried cannabis plant
- Pot is smoked in a marijuana cigarette called a joint
- Smoking marijuana can make you stoned or high

★ BUT WHAT MANY TEENS DON'T KNOW IS:

- Marijuana is much stronger today - and more dangerous - than it was in the sixties. Today, there is much more THC (the chemical that makes you high) in marijuana.
- Smoking marijuana makes it hard to concentrate and remember
- People who are stoned may remember their names, but not what their friends just said
- It is just as dangerous to drive a car stoned as it is to drive when you have been drinking
- Smoking marijuana slows down your reaction time and interferes with your coordination

★ IS IT DANGEROUS TO GET STONED JUST ONCE?

There is no way to predict exactly what will happen if you get high on marijuana. It depends on the kind of person you are, where you are, and the strength of the marijuana.

Here are some risks of getting stoned once:

- Unsafe driving
- Other accidents (drowning, falling, causing a fire)
- Doing things you might regret (taking dangerous risks)
- Feeling anxious
- Getting panicky
- Losing control of yourself

★ CAN YOU BECOME DEPENDENT ON MARIJUANA?

Yes, both physically (addiction) and mentally.

Here are some signs of dependence:

- Needing to get stoned before going out with friends
- Feeling like the party is not fun unless you are stoned
- Getting stoned if you feel nervous, angry, lonely, or depressed
- Using more marijuana than you intended to
- Needing more marijuana to get the same effect
- Inability to stop or reduce marijuana use
- Giving up or cutting down on important activities because of marijuana use
- Spending a lot of time getting marijuana, using it, or recovering from using it

★ WHAT CAN HAPPEN TO PEOPLE WHO SMOKE MARIJUANA FOR A LONG TIME?

- Single Focus: Losing interest in everything (school, grades, friends, family), except getting stoned
- Dependence: Feeling that you must smoke marijuana to feel okay
- Lung Damage: Marijuana has many of the same cancer-causing tars that cigarettes do
- Changes in the reproductive system

★ CAN GETTING STONED HELP YOU FEEL BETTER ABOUT YOUR PROBLEMS?

- Sometimes, smoking marijuana blocks uncomfortable feelings such as nervousness, anger, or loneliness for a while, but the problem that caused those feelings is still there when the marijuana wears off
- When you feel nervous, angry, or lonely, smoking marijuana can make you feel worse

Using marijuana to cope with feelings *doesn't work*. It makes it harder, not easier, to handle your problems.