

Sources

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National Facts on Marijuana Abuse and Dependence

- ❖ Marijuana is the most commonly used illegal drug in the United States. In 2003, more than 25 million Americans (over 10% of the population) used marijuana.¹
- ❖ About 2.1 million Americans (6,000 people per day) used marijuana for the first time in 2004. Of these 63.8 percent were under aged 18.²
- ❖ More than 45% of U.S. teenagers try marijuana before finishing high school.³
- ❖ More than 63% of daily marijuana users also use other drugs. Daily users also are more likely to smoke cigarettes and abuse alcohol compared to less frequent users and non-users.¹
- ❖ Marijuana is the primary substance of abuse for adolescents and young adults admitted to drug treatment. In 2002, more than 15% (289,532) of all admissions to treatment facilities in the US were for marijuana. (40 percent were in the 15-19 age range).⁴
- ❖ Young people are less likely to use marijuana if their parents strongly disapprove of its use. In 2003, only 5.4% of adolescents whose parents strongly disapproved of it used marijuana in the month prior to the survey, compared to 28.7% of youth whose parents did not strongly disapprove of it.⁵

The Face of Marijuana Dependence at Caron^{6,7}

- ❖ The high rates of cannabis addiction can be seen in the prevalence of younger patients who are admitted to Caron for cannabis treatment. From January 2000 through June 2005, almost 1,000 patients were admitted to Caron's residential treatment program for cannabis addiction. Over half of these patients were under 30 years of age.
- ❖ In a study on adolescents and adults at Caron, almost 80% of patients who abuse marijuana experienced symptoms of depression and/or anxiety in the month prior to admission.
- ❖ Over 95% of the patients reported they have used a tobacco product in their lifetime, and over 80% smoke cigarettes on a daily basis. In addition, more than three-quarters of these patients report they always smoke tobacco when they smoke marijuana.
- ❖ Students who smoke marijuana get lower grades and are less likely to graduate from high school, compared with their nonsmoking peers.
- ❖ Patients addicted to marijuana are likely to be younger than patients admitted for other drug or alcohol addiction. The average age of marijuana-dependent patients is 19 years.
- ❖ Marijuana-dependent patients report that they started using drugs at earlier ages than patients addicted to other drugs or alcohol. The average age of initiation to drug use is 14 years for marijuana-dependent patients, compared to 19 years for other patients.
- ❖ Four out of five marijuana-dependent patients are male, compared to three out of five patients addicted to other drugs and alcohol.
- ❖ More than 60% of marijuana-dependent patients are students.
- ❖ Treatment at Caron was the first addiction treatment for more than 3/4 of the patients addicted to marijuana.
- ❖ Marijuana-dependent patients (74.2%) are more likely to report prior emotional problems than other patients (62.6%).
- ❖ More than 80% of marijuana-dependent patients report nicotine use, compared to less than 70% of other patients.

Special Topic: How Young People Obtain Marijuana

- ❖ More than 50% of adolescents report that it would be easy for them to obtain marijuana.⁴
- ❖ More than 60% of adolescents in 2002 obtained the drug for free or shared someone else's marijuana. Girls (72%) were more likely than boys (52%) to not pay for the drug, while boys (41%) were more likely than girls (22%) to purchase it.⁸
- ❖ The most common place that young people obtain marijuana is inside a dwelling, such as a home, apartment or dorm room.⁸
- ❖ In 2002, almost 24% of adolescent marijuana purchases were conducted at school – 9% of the purchases were made inside schools and the other 15% were conducted on school property.⁸