

Get the Right Angle **Talking to Your Friends About Pot**

Marijuana isn't harmless. Smoking it has a lot of very specific – and very bad – effects. You know that, but maybe you have a friend who doesn't. What do you say to them? Try this list of facts:

It's as Bad for Your Health—or Worse, in Some Ways—as Tobacco

You might be surprised to learn that marijuana contains the same cancer-causing chemicals as tobacco, and at higher concentrations. Smoking four joints a week is the equivalent of smoking an entire pack of cigarettes every day, which even in the short term, leads to lung and respiratory problems – wheezing, frequent chest colds and – yick! – a nasty phlegmy cough. Long-term use increases the chances of tissue damage and lung cancer, and also causes changes in the brain similar to those caused by long-term use of cocaine and heroin.

Your Future Can Go Up in Smoke

Several studies have linked marijuana use with poor school performance. It's harder to concentrate and retain information when you've been using pot, and every day of school is important to teens in their peak learning years. It should be no surprise that the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse found teens with a “D” average or below more than four times as likely to have used marijuana in the last year than those with an “A” average. You're more likely to drop out – or get kicked out – of school, or out of sports or other activities if you smoke marijuana.

It's Unsafe

The likelihood of a car crash is increased by some of the immediate effects of smoking pot – longer reaction time, poor physical coordination and impaired concentration. Marijuana also makes you more likely to do something stupid you might regret. Pot-smoking has been linked with risky sexual behaviors that increase the likelihood of sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies.

It Can Make You Look Like a Gritball

We're all anxious enough about how we look without having to worry about the stained fingertips and teeth, stinking breath and bloodshot eyes that come with smoking pot. People who smoke dope can look a little – well, skeazy. They might lose interest in their appearance. They can also get the munchies when they're high – and it's not exactly health food they binge on. They don't call that tire-shaped ring of flab around the middle of a pothead the “stoner's spare” for nothing.

You Might Lose the Good Friends You Have—and Make Some That are Not So Good for You

Marijuana use by teens – like the use of many other drugs – can make it harder to keep good relationships with your friends and family. Marijuana users can become loners or hang out with people who may not be a good influence, which means that if you already have good friends and a supportive family, you can grow apart from them or lose their trust.

It Can Make You Feel Worse, Not Better

Smoking dope can lead to anxiety, panic attacks, depression and paranoia – and those problems don't improve over time. And don't you know someone who can't do anything without getting high? That's because they're addicted. Sixty percent of teenagers in drug treatment programs have a primary marijuana diagnosis.

It'll Get You Into Trouble

According to the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, kids who frequently use marijuana are almost four times as likely to commit a violent act – against either people or property – than those who don't. They're five times as likely to steal. So smoking marijuana can get you in trouble with the law and result in later problems like not being able to get a scholarship or a job.

It Channels Money to Some Very Bad People

The people who profit from the \$400 billion global drug business – and yes, marijuana is a big part of this business – are creep factor nine. They're criminals. If you're smoking pot, you could be the end-user of a product that may have been sold to help fund these people.

Okay, you now have the facts. Marijuana *is* riskier than you think. For more information, visit www.Freevibe.com.