

# Addictions and Recovery

[addictionsandrecovery.org](http://addictionsandrecovery.org)

## Marijuana

Marijuana is as addictive as alcohol. Approximately 10% of people who smoke marijuana will get addicted to it. That means 90% of people can use it recreationally. But for the other 10%, marijuana is not a harmless herb. They will have difficulty controlling their use, and they will continue to use even though it has negative consequences to their life. Every day people enter rehab programs or go to a 12 step group to deal with their marijuana addiction.

One study looked at 2,446 young adults between the ages of 14-24, and followed them for a period of 4 years. Approximately 10% met the criteria for marijuana addiction. 17% experienced withdrawal when they stopped using, 14% had difficulty controlling their use, and 13% continued to use even though they had health problems due to their marijuana use.(1)

Look at the [self-test questionnaire page](#) to see if you have an addiction.

## Cross Addiction

Marijuana is one of the most difficult drugs to give up. Not because it's more addictive than other drugs, but because addicts are more reluctant to let it go. They see it as their final vice.

If you want to recover from addiction, you also have to stop using marijuana. If you continue to use marijuana, you're saying that you don't want to change your life and you don't want to learn new ways to relax, escape, and reward yourself, which means nothing will have changed.

## The Consequences of Marijuana Use

Marijuana users are 4 times more likely to develop depression. One study looked at 1,920 people, and followed them for 16 years. It discovered that people who smoked marijuana were 4 times more likely to develop depression.(2)

Another study looked at 1601 students aged 14-15 and followed them for seven years. Approximately 60% of the students had used marijuana by the age of 20, and 7% had become daily users. The young women of the group who were daily users had a five time greater chance of developing depression.(3)

Marijuana almost triples the chance of developing psychotic symptoms. A 3-year study followed 4,045 psychosis-free people. It came to the conclusion that marijuana smokers are three times more likely to develop psychotic symptoms (including manic-depression) than non-smokers.(4)

Post-acute withdrawal. Look at the [post-acute withdrawal page](#) to learn about those symptoms and how to deal with them.

The broader consequences of addiction. Look at the [disease of addiction page](#) to learn more about the broader consequences of addiction. (Reference: [www.AddictionsAndRecovery.org](http://www.AddictionsAndRecovery.org))

## **Marijuana and Pain Control**

Marijuana is no more effective in controlling pain than codeine. One study reviewed 9 clinical trials that compared marijuana with other pain medication in a total of 222 patients. The study looked at 5 cancer pain trials, 2 chronic non-malignant pain trials, and 2 acute postoperative pain trials. The review showed that marijuana was no more effective in controlling pain than 60-120 mg codeine. But it also showed that marijuana had more side effects than codeine including the fact that it caused more depression.(5)