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## MARIJUANA

### What is Marijuana?

Marijuana, the most often used illegal drug in this country, is a product of the hemp plant, *Cannabis sativa*. The main active chemical in marijuana, also present in other forms of cannabis, is THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol). Of the roughly 400 chemicals found in the cannabis plant, THC affects the brain the most. However, when oxidized or burned, marijuana yields some 2,000 chemicals. In the 1960s, the percentage of THC found in dried marijuana averaged between 3 and 7 percent. Marijuana plants are now genetically engineered to be much higher in THC, some up to 30 percent.



### What are the street names/slang terms for Marijuana?

Aunt Mary, Boom, Chronic (Marijuana alone or with crack), Dope, Gangster, Ganja, Grass, Hash, Herb, Kif, Mary Jane, Pot, Reefer, Sinsemilla, Skunk, Weed, 420.

### What does it look like?

Marijuana is a green or gray mixture of dried, shredded flowers and leaves of the hemp plant (*Cannabis sativa*). It is characterized by its distinctive seven-leafed configurations. Each leaf has serrated edges.

### How is it used?

Most users roll loose marijuana into a cigarette called a "joint". It can be smoked in a water pipe, called a "bong", or mixed into food or brewed as tea. It has also appeared in cigars called "blunts".

### What are its short-term effects?

Short-term effects of marijuana include problems with memory and learning, distorted perception (sights, sounds, time, touch), trouble with thinking and problem solving, impaired short-term memory, slowed reaction times, blurred or double vision, loss of motor coordination, increased heart rate, and anxiety. These effects are even greater when other drugs are mixed with marijuana. A user may also experience dry mouth and throat and bloodshot eyes.

### What are its long-term effects?

Marijuana smoke contains some of the same cancer-causing compounds as tobacco, sometimes in higher concentrations. Studies show that someone who smokes five joints per week may be taking in as many cancer-causing chemicals as someone who smokes a full pack of cigarettes every day.

### What is its federal classification?

Schedule I

### Source

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)