



Maryvale High School has implemented the High School Health and Wellness (HSHW) grant in partnership with the Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family. HSHW is a substance use prevention grant that allows the Maryvale community to utilize a comprehensive evidenced based prevention curriculum, provide prevention resources, and workshops/in services to all stakeholder groups. The goal of the HSHW grant is to create a drug-free learning environment by increasing awareness to prevent, reduce or eliminate risk behaviors. The HSHW team has created this newsletter to educate staff members on substance use trends and empower staff to support and refer students who may be at-risk. For more information or to schedule a workshop, please reach out to a HSHW Prevention Team member.

Side Note

How to share the facts

As an adult on a PUHSD campus, it might feel challenging to share information relating to substance use with students. Here are some resources to make talking to youth easier:

- [NIDA FOR TEENS](#)
- [DRUG-IMPAIRED DRIVING FACTS](#)
- [NIDA INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND EDUCATORS](#)
- [MARIJUANA TALK KIT FOR PARENTS AND EDUCATORS](#)
- [DRUG TREND REPORT](#)

If you are unsure where to begin, please call a High School Health and Wellness Team Member on your campus. HSHW staff can arrange a workshop for students on any topic relating to drugs and alcohol.

What's impacting schools today?

Marijuana: Student Perception and Risk

Knowing the health risks that come with using or abusing drugs convinces most teens to stay away from them, but what if you don't think certain drugs are unsafe? Finding from the Arizona Youth Survey and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration show that fewer teens believe abusing marijuana is bad for their health. This belief is contributing to higher rates of abuse of marijuana.

- Only 25.40% of youth in **Maricopa County** perceived great risk of harm from smoking marijuana once a month
- 25% of **PUHSD** students saw no risk in smoking marijuana regularly (once or twice a week)
- In the US the number of 10th graders that have tried vaping marijuana has increased by 62.7%

The National Institute on Drug Abuse reports that the less harmful teens perceive a drug to be, the more the use of that drug increases. Since marijuana/medical marijuana is legal in many states, kids may believe it can't really be harmful. It is important that adults know the facts so they can debunk false information.

How does marijuana affect a person's life?

Compared to those who do not use marijuana, those who frequently use large amounts reported the following: Lower life satisfaction, poorer mental health, poorer physical health, and more relationship problems.

People also report less academic success. For example, marijuana use linked to a higher likelihood of dropping out of school, and more absences, accidents, and injuries.

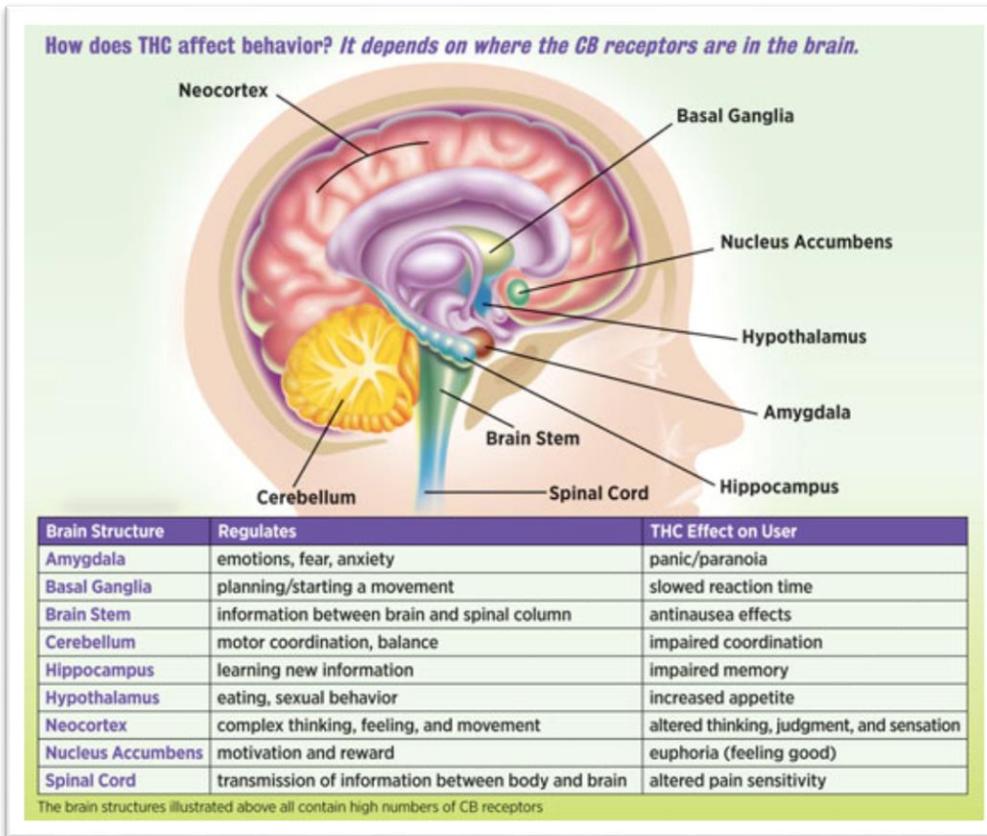


Is Marijuana Addictive?

Marijuana use can lead to the development of a substance use disorder, a medical illness in which a person is unable to stop using even though it's causing health and social problems in their life. Research suggest that between 9 and 13 percent of those who use marijuana may develop an addiction. **People who begin using marijuana before age 18 are four to seven times more likely than adults to become addicted.**

How does marijuana effect the brain?

Short-term effects: When a person smokes marijuana, THC quickly passes from the lungs into the bloodstream. The blood carries the chemical to the brain and other organs throughout the body. The body absorbs THC more slowly when the person eats or drinks it. In that case, they generally feel the effects after 30 minutes to 1 hour. THC acts on specific brain cell receptors that ordinarily react to natural THC-like chemicals. These natural chemicals play a role in normal brain development and function. Marijuana over activates parts of the brain that contain the highest number of these receptors. This causes the "high" that people feel.



Long-term effects: Marijuana also affects brain development. **When people begin using marijuana as teenagers, the drug may impair thinking, memory, and learning functions and affect how the brain builds connections between the areas necessary for these functions.** Researchers are still studying how long marijuana's effects last and whether some changes may be permanent. For example, a study from New Zealand conducted in part by researchers at Duke University showed that people who started smoking marijuana heavily in their teens and had an ongoing marijuana use disorder lost an average of 8 IQ points between ages 13 and 38. The lost mental abilities didn't fully return in those who quit marijuana as adults. Those who started smoking marijuana as adults didn't show notable IQ declines.

Popular Questions

Is marijuana a gateway drug?

The short answer is... we are not sure. One hypothesis is that it all depends on a person's environment. People who are more vulnerable to drug-taking are simply more likely to start with readily available substances such as marijuana, tobacco or alcohol. In addition, their subsequent social interactions with others who use drugs increases their chances of trying new drugs.

Can a person overdose on marijuana?

An overdose occurs when a person uses enough of the drug to produce life threatening symptoms or death. There are no reports of teens or adults dying from marijuana alone. However, some people who use marijuana can feel some very uncomfortable side effects, especially when using marijuana products with high THC levels.

