

Manitoba Addictions Awareness Week

Answers to.....Marijuana...True or False or ???

Take charge of your own health – Do some research – Carefully evaluate the facts you find!

1. **Marijuana cigarettes are safer than tobacco.**
False. Marijuana produces more tar than a strong cigarette tobacco. The concentration of some cancer-producing agents is higher in marijuana tar than in the same weight of tobacco tar.
2. **A single positive urine test indicates a person was under the influence of marijuana at the time of the test.**
Maybe. A single positive urine test can indicate recent use or use that occurred weeks earlier. THC, the chemical in marijuana, which makes a person “stoned”, and its metabolites can stay in the blood for days, and can be stored in the fatty tissue of the body and slowly released over a period of several weeks.
3. **Marijuana is not psychologically addictive.**
False. Regular long-term marijuana use may result in a person becoming psychologically dependent. Users believe that they can’t function effectively without the drug. Withdrawal symptoms can include anxiety and nervousness and can result in sleeping problems and loss of appetite.
4. **There are long-term consequences of pre-natal exposure to Marijuana.**
Maybe. Based on data from the Ottawa Prospective Prenatal Study, long-term consequences to the child are very subtle and tend to appear later in the child’s development. Impairments suggested by the data have implications for school performance in areas such as: verbal ability, sustained attention and memory. Marijuana crosses the placenta, so best advice is not to use or be exposed to Marijuana smoke during pregnancy or while nursing.
5. **A 2004 CCSA Survey indicated almost 70% of 18-19 year olds have tried cannabis.**
True. In the Canadian Addiction Survey (Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, 2004), of particular concern is the high rate of lifetime and current use in teenagers, with almost 70% of 18-19 year old’s having tried cannabis, and about 50% having smoked it in the previous year.
6. **Marijuana will not impair driving skills.**
False. Experiments have demonstrated that the drug interferes with skills essential for safe driving such as: motor co-ordination, depth perception, judgment and concentration. Therefore, marijuana makes it difficult to judge distances and to react to signals and sounds of the road. See 2.8 **Substance Use Among Manitoba Students** for statistics on driving and cannabis use.
7. **Long term, heavy use of marijuana can rob a person of motivation.**
Maybe. Some research indicates heavy, active marijuana use may contribute to a decrease in motivation (referred to as Amotivational Syndrome), while some research dismisses this claim. However, any time substance use becomes an important part of an individual’s life, there can be decreased time and energy spent on other activities.
8. **Clinical trials studying medical uses of Marijuana are being funded in Canada.**
True. Anecdotal reports have indicated that THC and other marijuana constituents relieve symptoms associated with such medical conditions as: multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, HIV/AIDS and glaucoma by reducing such symptoms as nausea, vomiting and wasting syndrome. Currently the Canadian government is funding clinical trials through the Medical Marijuana Research Programme. This will provide credible, evidence-based research on this subject.
9. **Marijuana is not an hallucinogen.**
False. Marijuana belongs to the drug class Hallucinogens and is a unique sedative-euphoriant-psychedelic drug.
10. **Marijuana can temporarily impair short-term memory.**
True. Marijuana interferes with memory processing; as with alcohol the impairment is not in the ability to recall old, well-learned memories, but to form new ones.