



Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula®

**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES**

Clint Eastwood Youth Program



**"It was  
only a  
joint."**

There are many reasons someone might use marijuana. Maybe their friends or family members use it. Perhaps they think it's "cool." Or it could be that they feel the need to escape their problems. More than 3 million kids ages 12-17 have used marijuana at least once during the last year, according to the Department of Health and Human Services. Here's why:

- Often someone tries marijuana "just to see what it's all about."
- Sometimes it's "just for fun" or "because everyone does it."
- Some adolescents start smoking marijuana to "fit in," "be cool," "not look like a (baby, dork, loser ....)"
- Adolescence is a time filled with mixed emotions. Marijuana is sometimes used as a way to feel better.
- Marijuana may be a way to get high, deal with stress, and make coping with situations easier (going on a date, meeting someone new, etc.)
- Habitual use can occur as the person begins to depend on marijuana to get through the day.
- "Getting high" may be the only relief for anxiety that can develop when not using, and dependency on marijuana can be the result.
- Dependency may turn to addiction, as marijuana is now shown to cause a mild physical withdrawal syndrome.
- Marijuana or other substances are often used to cover up other symptoms (problems in school, conflicts with parents, low self-confidence, identity issues, depression, anxiety, obsessive thoughts, attention deficit disorders...).
- Dependence on marijuana may be characterized by use every day, every other day, or even every weekend.

## Warning signs of marijuana use:

- Missing school, arriving late to school, taking longer lunch breaks
- Erratic performance — doing well at times, doing poorly at other times
- Lower school performance
- Errors in judgment
- Becoming easily confused
- Forgetting details, confused thinking, difficulty concentrating, forgetting instructions
- Ignoring safety rules, taking needless risks, reckless behavior
- Slowed reaction time, low energy, low motivation
- Social withdrawal
- Hanging out with known drug users

## Marijuana is not harmless

Many still believe marijuana is “not so bad” or that it’s “harmless.” This is simply not true. There are psychological effects — memory and learning problems, loss of coordination, difficulty thinking, distorted perception, increased anxiety, decreased motivation, increased errors, and increased accidents. And there are physical effects — cancer, breathing problems, increased respiratory difficulties, and damage to the immune and reproductive systems.

What you do has an impact on your children. Children whose parents use alcohol or drugs have a greater risk of using alcohol or drugs.

If you think your child might be experimenting with drugs, even if it “was only a joint,” talk with them. Show them you care by helping them get help before it becomes a more serious problem.

**This information is brought to you by Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula’s Clint Eastwood Youth Program, providing a structured program to treat drug and alcohol abuse as well as mental health problems.**

**For more information or to schedule a free screening, please call  
(831) 373-0924 or (800) 528-8080**



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