

# MARIJUANA:

## Get the Facts

### Natural, but not harmless.

- Marijuana use contributes to health problems
- It is four times stronger than in the 1980s
- It is risky no matter how you use it (smoking, vaporizing, or edibles [food containing marijuana])
- Heavy use in young adults can cause lasting damage to the brain and decrease intelligence
- Marijuana can directly worsen symptoms of anxiety, depression, and schizophrenia

### Marijuana can be addictive.

- Marijuana use can lead to addiction, just like with other drugs
- 4.5 million people in the U.S. are addicted
- The chances of addiction are increased in adolescents (17%) and people who use every day (25-50%)
- Withdrawal symptoms include cravings, trouble sleeping, anxiety, and appetite loss

### Marijuana use impairs driving.

- Using marijuana doubles a driver's risk of an accident
- Using marijuana with alcohol increases the risk of an accident

### Legal does not mean safer.

- Marijuana is not FDA-approved
- There may be some chemicals in marijuana that help a range of illnesses or symptoms, but there is not enough research that shows marijuana's benefits
- The benefits do not outweigh the health risks

### Marijuana and pregnancy.

- Marijuana use during pregnancy affects child development
- Health risks for the child include low birth weight; premature birth; problems with attention, memory, and problem solving; and reduced IQ

### Using marijuana with other substances.

- Mixing marijuana and alcohol increases risk for nausea and reactions of panic, anxiety, or paranoia
- People who smoke both marijuana and tobacco have more health problems
- Mixing tobacco and marijuana increases risk of developing respiratory diseases and/or cancer

### Tips for Cutting Back

#### Think about changing.

- Why do you use? What do you like about it?
- Why do you want to cut down or stop?

#### Plan for the change you want.

- Set a goal and date for changing your use. Make it realistic.
- Share your plan with people you trust and ask for support.

#### Act on your decision.

- *Distract and do something.* Make a list of fun activities (not related to your marijuana use) and keep busy.
- *Delay.* Stop and think before using. Wait 15 minutes to ride the craving, and the wave of desire may pass.
- *Plan ahead.* Avoid high-risk situations and people who use.

#### Have a back-up plan.

- If you haven't achieved your goal yet, that's okay.
- Consider the situation in which you used and see what could be changed next time.
- Review your plan and see if it needs revising.

### Helpful Links:

<http://easyread.drugabuse.gov/marijuana-effects.php>  
<http://www.drugfree.org/drug-guide/marijuana>

### Relaxation Alternatives:

Everyday Tai Chi:

<http://www.everyday-taichi.com/index.html>

3-Minute Breathing Space: <http://umurl.us/GUi>

Breathing and Relaxation Exercise:

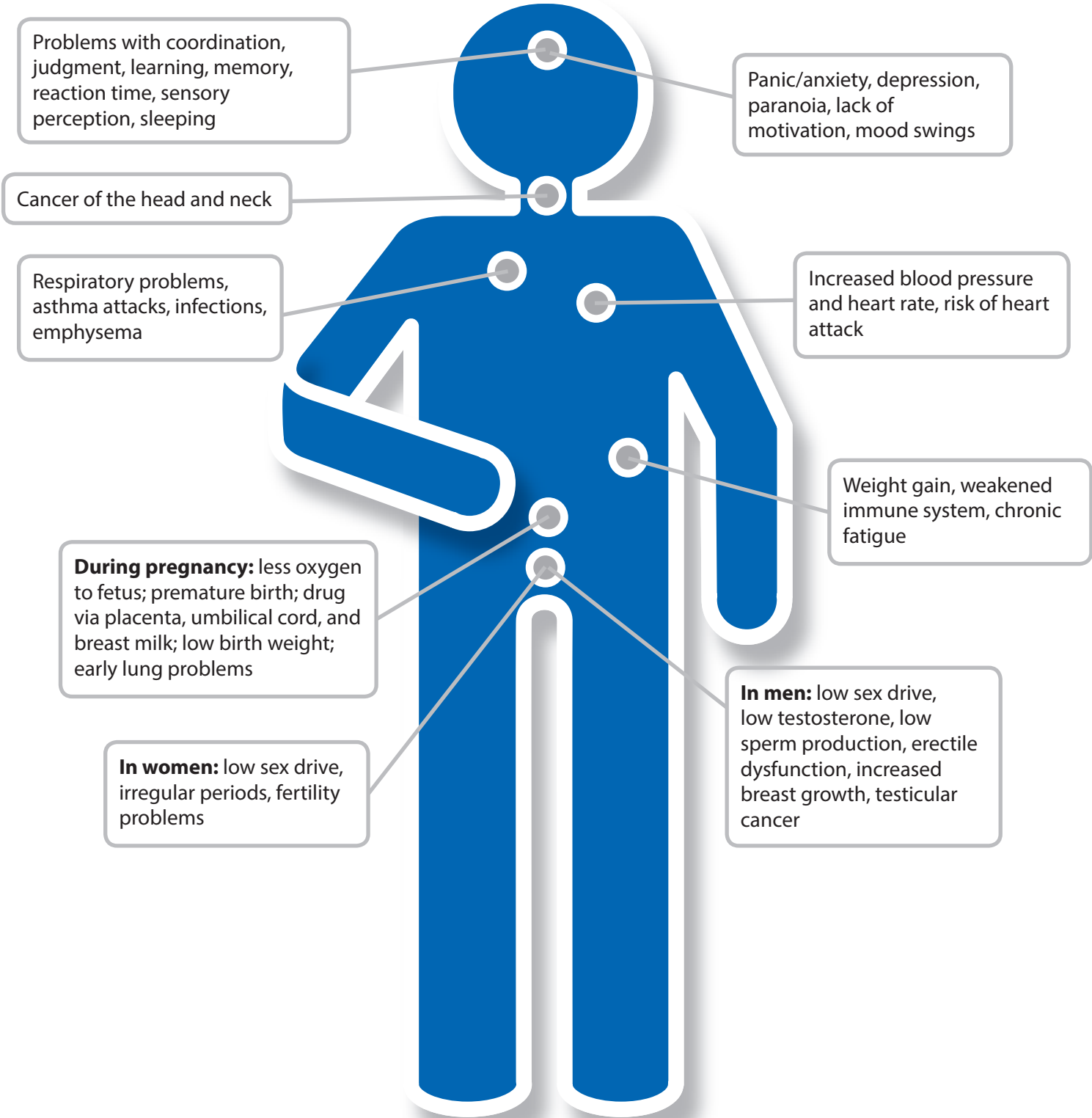
<http://umurl.us/AMF>

Body Scan Meditation: <http://umurl.us/B0dyScan>

Sources: BNI-ART Institute; National Institute on Drug Abuse, <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/infofacts/marijuana>; National Alliance on Mental Illness, [http://www.nami.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Hearts\\_and\\_Minds/Smoking\\_Cessation/Marijuana\\_and\\_Mental\\_Illness.htm](http://www.nami.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Hearts_and_Minds/Smoking_Cessation/Marijuana_and_Mental_Illness.htm); University of Washington Alcohol & Drug Abuse Institute, <http://learnaboutmarijuanawa.org/factsheets/tobacco.htm>; Mixing Cannabis and Alcohol, <http://ncpic.org.au/ncpic/publications/factsheets/article/mixing-cannabis-and-alcohol>; A Guide to Cutting Down and Stopping Cannabis Use, <http://www.knowcannabis.org.uk/images/KClargeguide.pdf>

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## Effects on the Body



Mid-America (HHS Region 7)

**ATTC**

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



**SBIRT**

Screening, Brief Intervention,  
and Referral to Treatment  
for Substance Use