**If You Choose To Use Marijuana – How To Reduce Your Risk**
**Tips from Andrew Weil, MD**

1. Marijuana is illegal. Being detected as a marijuana user can cost you your job and land you in a lot of trouble. Be aware of the dangers associated with acquiring an illegal drug.

2. Define what benefits you want from pot. Do not use it just because other people do or because it is available.

3. If you get effects you like from marijuana, you will have to take precautions if you want to keep enjoying them.

4. Set limits on usage. For example, you may want to use pot only with certain friends, only on weekends, or only when you have no work to do. Such rules are necessary if you want to prevent your use from turning into a habit that gives you little satisfaction.

5. Remember that it can be dangerous to drive, operate machinery, or engage in hazardous activities under the influence of marijuana. The drug can cause illusions of time and space and always takes getting used to.

6. If you find the effects you like from marijuana becoming less intense or disappearing altogether, **stop using** it. You can resume after a break and get them back. The trick is to keep frequency of use below the level where you become insensitive to marijuana's interesting effects on consciousness. Odd as it may sound, less is more, and you can easily prove that to yourself.

7. If you find that the effects you like are disappearing, the worst things you can do are smoke more or look for stronger pot. Those actions will just increase the problem.

8. Consider using marijuana by eating it in some form rather than smoking it. It is more trouble to take by mouth and the effects are different, but the risk of dependence is less.

9. Be careful about combining marijuana with other psychoactive drugs.

10. Be careful about set and setting, especially if trying marijuana for the first time.

11. Do not use marijuana on the job or at school. Most people would not drink alcohol in those situations, and just because it's easier to function on pot is no reason to use it. The more situations in which you allow yourself to smoke, the more likely you are to become dependent.

12. If you develop a cough or wheeze, or become more susceptible to chest colds, marijuana may be doing harm to your respiratory tract. Stop using it, cut down on use, or switch to eating it.

13. If you find that you are using marijuana more than you want and are not getting useful effects from it, consider the possibility that it is controlling you more than you are controlling it. Try to do without it for a while. If you cannot, you may need outside help in breaking the habit.

14. Consider using a cannabis vaporizer to reduce or eliminate lung irritation/respiratory disease that may result from inhaling harmful smoke toxins – a byproduct of combustion. (Not from A. Weil – Added by Wellness Promotion Staff based on more recent research)
Suggested Reading

Much has been published about marijuana in recent years, but few books worth reading exist.


Although teen-agers make up the bulk of the movie-going public, few films have capitalized on the popularity of marijuana among young people. Four notable exceptions are *Up in Smoke* and *Nice Dreams* with Cheech and Chong, *The Harder They Come*, about marijuana in Jamaica in the 1970s, and Peter Fonda's classic from the 1960s, *Easy Rider*. An outrageous anti-marijuana propaganda film from the 1930s, *Reefer Madness*, now plays on college campuses and in "art" movie houses, usually to the delight of mostly stoned audiences.