

Cannabis

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## Cannabis

The use of cannabis has been criminalized by today's society. Some believe that it is a gateway drug and addictive, while others believe it is useful and natural. Cannabis is slowly evolving into a commonly used drug. Several States are attempting or have passed a legalization law for the use of marijuana including Colorado and Washington. Marijuana can be used for recreational purposes, medical purposes, or can be abused. These are just several of the ways in which marijuana is known for.

Even though some states such as Colorado and Washington have made marijuana legal in attempt to decriminalize it. It is still illegal under the federal law because of the Controlled Substances Act of 1970. According to the Wikimedia Foundation "Controlled Substances Act", the act labels how addictive, and unsafe the drug is. Marijuana is classified as a schedule 1 drug, which is the highest risk for addiction and other potential dangers. It contains very strict criterias.<sup>1</sup> There have been several attempts for rescheduling the drug into another classification . If a petition is made concerning the topic, it must be approved by the Drug

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<sup>1</sup> "Controlled Substances Act." 2014, <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Controlled\\_Substances\\_Act](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Controlled_Substances_Act)>.

Enforcement Administration (DEA) . It is not always accepted but when it is, It must continue onto further administrations for further discussion. The only other way to change the law is by state laws, and there has been no recent activity concerning the government.

Because marijuana is classified as a dangerous drug, there can be jail time for the possession of the plant. As the possessions of marijuana gets larger, there is more risk of a longer jail time sentence and also may lead to felonies. Many laws play a role when it comes to marijuana, yet recently under the presidency of Barack Obama, there have been ballots in order to let the voters choose what they want.

As of 2012, Colorado became the first state to authorize the recreational use of marijuana. There are limitations and regulations that come along with the new law in Colorado and may vary within other states. Anyone under the age of 21 is capable of having a medical marijuana card as long as certain procedures are followed. There are two options that someone may take .The first way to qualify for a medical marijuana card is by getting an authorization ,recommendation ,or prescription from a physician. The patient must have chronic pains or other

symptoms. Without obtaining one, there is no way in receiving the medical card. There also needs to be proof of a Colorado ID and must be at least the age of 18. If under the age of 18, there must be parent consent and signed paper work. Limitations are put into place such as only being allowed to purchase an ounce of marijuana per transaction. Different rules apply to anyone from the age of 21 or older. Anyone of this age does not have to obtain a medical marijuana card. They can freely purchase, distribute, and grow cannabis. It is still illegal for someone of the age of 21 to distribute to a minor. If someone sold marijuana to a minor there would be jail time. No one is allowed to smoke marijuana in public areas for this is also illegal. The only place to smoke is in private properties that are yours or with permission of others.

The big benefit that comes from the recreational use of marijuana for the state and government is that cannabis is heavily taxed. The United States government has saved millions of dollars on tax revenue. In the article "Colorado Gets \$2 Million From Marijuana tax", State officials state that there has been a "15% excise tax, a 10% special sales tax and a 2.9% sales tax on recreational

marijuana .”<sup>2</sup> It is also claimed that marijuana is “one of the most heavily taxed consumer products in colorado. ”<sup>3</sup> This is an advantage for the state government because the tax money goes into helping and building schools and other educational programs.

Another great Cannabis product that has been publicized and recognized is known as Hemp. It is an “environmentally friendly ”<sup>4</sup> plant. It grows several feet high and is commonly grown in farms. It is a great marketing tool that is also very healthy and natural. Hemp can be converted into clothing, jewelry ,oil, lotion and paper. It can also be put into food, made into salads, and can even be made into baked goods. It is legal to grow hemp plants but under the FDA it is still illegal because it is still under the substance act.

Cannabis is also used for medical purposes. Even though there must be an approval by a physician to get a medical marijuana card, marijuana is still used

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<sup>2</sup> "Colorado Gets \$2 Million from Marijuana Taxes." 2014.  
<<http://money.cnn.com/2014/03/10/news/marijuana-tax-revenue/>>.

<sup>3</sup> Martinez "10 Things to Know about Nation's First Recreational Marijuana Shops in Colorado." 2014  
<<http://www.cnn.com/2013/12/28/us/10-things-colorado-recreational-marijuana/>>.

<sup>4</sup> "Hemp." 2014, <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hemp>>.

for severe cases and conditions. It applies for people going through depression, insomnia, illnesses, or physical pain. Pain can come from practically any type of surgery such as spinal, back, knee, etc. Also it can come from Arthritis, and chronic diseases. There are many ways in which someone experiencing pain will handle the situation. Marijuana allows the pain to be more bearable. People who smoke marijuana do it in order to help with specific parts of their bodies whether its physical or mental pain. Indica cannabis is a strain that is mainly effective on the body which helps insomniac patients. It relaxes the body, and muscles. It is mainly smoked at night or afternoon because it is more calming and “lowers the activity function”. This helps the body to become zen which encourages sleep. People who suffer from depression typically smoke Sativa Cannabis because it is more functional to the mind. It influences the cerebral part of the brain to produce positive and uplifting thoughts. These are just several examples on why some people consume marijuana.

Many physicians have used marijuana as a medication because of the minimal side effects it has compared to medication pills. In "Pain Management-Side Effects of Pain Medicines" finds that "The majority of the medication pills come with

“nausea, confusion, loss in appetite, fatigue, dizziness” and other symptoms.<sup>5</sup> All these side effects can increase or decrease depending on the person. Very dangerous side effects come along with pills as well which may be long term. The article continues by explaining how corticosteroids have long term conditions such as osteoporosis, which is a disease when the bones become fragile and weak. There are also Cataracts which affects the lenses of the eyes. Other pills have a high risk for addiction. Marijuana is a pain reliever and relaxes the muscles in the body. It contains Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) which has many effects. Yet an important part is that it is an appetite stimulator. Both AID and Cancer patients use marijuana. This is because it decreases pains, and nausea while also giving them an appetite which will help with “maintaining body weight”, especially through chemotherapy. It also helps other syndromes and diagnoses. Marijuana also contains Cannabidiol (CBD) which is used with in patients suffering from parkinson's disease, schizophrenia, and epilepsy which leads to seizures. There are many reasons why marijuana particularly CBD helps these diseases, but one of the most important thing is that the effect for the patients are fewer side effects.

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<sup>5</sup> "Pain Management-Side Effects of Pain Medicines."  
<<http://www.webmd.com/pain-management/tc/pain-management-side-effects-of-pain-medicines>>.

People suffering from these have several daily medications with severe side effects.

This is also why marijuana is such a powerful and useful drug.<sup>6</sup>

There has been many cases where reduced seizures for infants with Dravet syndrome. Those with Dravet syndrome may have upwards of 100 seizures per day, with the most intense episodes lasting up to 15 minutes. Prolonged damage is most likely to occur the longer the epileptic attack is. Cannabis oil has been proven to be very effective to reduce and help with seizures. This plant has made a huge impact on severe diseases. This drug applies to anyone who suffers from physical or mental pain and disorders.

Although Marijuana is not an addictive drug, it can still be abused. A person may not experience any type of severe withdrawal symptoms like with other drugs, which is why it is not considered addictive. Simple symptoms may occur for a brief period of time. Symptoms such as headaches, and nausea. The “Drugs, Brains, and Behavior : The Science of Addiction” article states that the abuse of cannabis is mainly throughout the adolescents because it is considered an illegal drug for anyone under the age of 21. Charts show the increase of marijuana from 8th to

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<sup>6</sup> "Tetrahydrocannabinol." 2014, <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tetrahydrocannabinol>>.

12th graders and the comparison to the percent change of previous years. These are all based on percentages. If marijuana is taken at a young age, it may damage and stunt the growth development of the brain. Even though it is unlikely to happen, it is possible. This is why it's best to wait until the appropriate time for the correct reasons. Although it is being consumed by teenagers, the abuse applies to any age. It is common to abuse the drug after any type of pain one may go through. This could be physical or mental pain. There are programs that help patients who may be too dependent on the drug. People who depend on the drug never seem to be aware of the situation. Typically it's different from other prescription medicine because there is no certain amount one should smoke. The drug abuse may be to the point where rehabilitation centers, or support group meetings are considered. It is crucial to remember that marijuana is harmless, but because everybody's body is different, it may not be the drug one needs. It may also be abused just because of the feeling it gives you. There should be a more prioritized reason for the consumption of any drug. Marijuana can help a patient to a great extent if used properly. That is the most important that someone can do for their body.

Cannabis is a very healthy and effective drug. Although it has some negative aspects such as abuse, it has proven that it's more than just a drug. Studies have shown the improvement in a wide range of diseases and other pains and problems. There are also less side effects than prescribed medications which is a huge benefit to the consumer. Cannabis is a therapeutic plant which enables everyone to benefit from it one way or another. Hemp is also a great way to maintain relaxed, and be friendly to the environment. It is best to ask a physician even if you are 21. It's a good way to know what it is that your body needs. Even though Cannabis is a positive plant with much to offer, it should be used the right way, at the right age. When Colorado passed the law, it was intended to be used properly. Passing the legalization law was a great way to collect money, gain health and consumer awareness. Marijuana has both positive and negative aspects to it. It should also be taken into consideration that no one should drive under the influence of marijuana. It is very dangerous and may harm those around. Plus you never know if you will get pulled over. It is important to stay safe because marijuana is safe. Marijuana can be used for recreational purposes, medical purposes, or can be abused. It is not a drug for everyone and not

everyone may benefit from it. Every consumer should be aware of what they put in their body and Cannabis has nothing to hide. Cannabis is a very powerful plant that helps many diverse medical situations. Having several states pass the legalization law only gives hope to what the future holds. Hopefully some day marijuana will be legal for both state and FDA.

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Outline

**Title:** Cannabis

**Topic Sentence:** The use of cannabis has been criminalized by today's society. Some believe that it is a gateway drug and addictive, while others believe it is useful and natural.

**Thesis:** . Marijuana can be used for recreational purposes, medical purposes, or can be abused. These are just several of the ways in which marijuana is known for.

**1)** New laws have allowed Colorado to have recreational marijuana.

**a)** It brings in millions of dollars on tax revenue, can use it to build schools, Help academic programs

**b)** Allows 21 year olds to purchase, distribute, and grow. There are more ways in which teens under 21 can get the medical marijuana card. Through parent, or 18 years old, and physician.

**c)** Hemp is another therapeutic way to help people, it can be marketed and can become many different products. ex. lotion, food, oil, jewelry

**2)** Marijuana can be used as a medicine and can help a diverse amount of diseases.

**a)** Can help physical pain such as surgery. Give you a better pain tolerance and relieve you from pain.

**b)** Marijuana can help with mental pain/disorder. Helps people suffering with depression, insomnia, and other mental disorders.

**c)** severe cases like H.I.V, and going through chemotherapy and treatment. Better alternative than prescribed pain killers. Less side effects.

**3)** Medical marijuana can be abused if not taken and consumed correctly.

**a)** abuse is most common within adolescents. Its illegal for them so they attempt to try it. Can affect their developmental growth.

**b)** Happen to anyone who is too dependant on the drug because of the pain relief. People can also abuse it just because they like the feeling.

**c)** there are help options that someone can take such as rehabilitation, group meeting, counseling, and other ways. Most people are not aware that they are abusing it. It is not addictive though.

**Conclusion:** Everybody's body is different and it may not benefit everyone. You should ask a doctor even if you are at the age of 21. It is important to not drive under the influence of Cannabis because you could possibly go to jail. Marijuana is a safe drug if you use it properly. More hope is coming because Colorado already passed the legalization law which is encouraging to keep moving forward with the plant.

