

**MYTH  
or  
FACT**

# Marijuana Harmless? Think Again

MarijuanaHarmlessThinkAgain.org

**Myth:** Our prisons are full of people convicted of simple marijuana possession.

**FACT:** Less than 1.4% of prisoners are in prison for marijuana drug offense only. Others are criminals guilty of trafficking, growing, manufacturing, selling, or distributing —convicted of multiple offenses that include a marijuana charge. <sup>1</sup>

**Myth:** Marijuana is not addictive.

**FACT:**

**9%** of people who use marijuana will become dependent on it.

**17%** of those who start using in their teens will become dependent on it.

**25-50%** of daily users are dependent on it. <sup>2</sup>

**Myth:** Marijuana has never killed anyone.

**FACT:** News headlines: “Father of dead baby smoked pot next to car;” “Family in marijuana-edibles murder speak out.” Read more at: <sup>3</sup>

**Myth:** Marijuana is less dangerous than alcohol.

**FACT:** <sup>2</sup>

EFFECTS	Alcohol	Marijuana
Impairs judgment	yes	yes
Slows reaction time	yes	yes
Affects motor skills	yes	yes
Increases risk for accidents	yes	yes
Changes behavior and mood	yes	yes
Dependence/addiction	yes	yes

**Myth:** Legalized marijuana will lower crime.

**FACT:** Marijuana became legal in Colorado on January 1, 2014. Crime rate in Denver is up for the first six months in 2014 by 6.7% compared to the same time period in 2013. <sup>5</sup>

**Myth:** Tax revenue from drug sales will offset increased costs to society.

**FACT:** Current alcohol tax revenues cover less than 10% of alcohol-related costs which equal 223.5 billion annually in health care, criminal justice and workplace lost productivity. <sup>4</sup>

**Myth:** Legalized marijuana will reduce illegal drug trade and cartel activities.

**FACT:** Black market sales and growing operations, drug cartels and illegal drug trafficking are still exploding problems in Colorado. <sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> APAAC, Fischer, Daryl, Ph.D, Prisoners in Arizona: A Profile of the Inmate Population, March 4, 2010 and Office of Drug Control Policy “Who Is Really In Prison for Marijuana.” publication [www.prisonpolicy.org/scans/whos\\_in\\_prison\\_for\\_marij.pdf](http://www.prisonpolicy.org/scans/whos_in_prison_for_marij.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> NIDA.gov

<sup>3</sup> <http://marijuanaharmlessthinkagain.org/true-stories/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/features/alcoholconsumption/>; Taxpolicycenter.org; <http://www.ttb.gov/pdf/budget/2012bib.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Report: Legalization of Marijuana in Colorado the Impact, Volume 2, August 2014