If you choose to use marijuana

HOW TO REDUCE YOUR RISK

Marijuana use is illegal under federal law. Recreational use is illegal in most states. Being identified as a marijuana user can land you in legal trouble and limit your academic, athletic, and employment opportunities.

If you choose to use, define what benefits you want from marijuana. Do not use it just because other people do, because it is available, or to cope with ongoing stress or anxiety.

The effects of marijuana (or any drug) are highly variable. The effects depend on its potency, the method of delivery, and how it is used (where, why, how often, etc).

Infrequent, small consumption of marijuana (e.g., several hits from a joint once or twice a week) is probably not more harmful than moderate alcohol use (e.g., 2 beers twice a week). Frequent, heavy marijuana use is clearly harmful.

If marijuana gives you effects that you enjoy, you will need to take precautions if you want to keep enjoying them. Set limits on your use.

If you find the effects you like from marijuana becoming less intense or disappearing altogether, stop using for a while. Less is more—and you can easily prove that to yourself. The worst thing you can do is use more frequently or try more potent forms. That will exacerbate the problem.

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

Sources:
Dr. Andrew Weil, holistic health practitioner and author
Professional Advisory Board, Student Health 101

For a science-based guide to marijuana, see Student Health 101, May 2016.