

## THE EFFECTS OF MARIJUANA USE ON DRIVING

### Smoking marijuana can impair driving skills including-

- perception (what a driver thinks he sees)
- coordination (the way his hands, feet and mind work together especially if something unexpected happens)
- vision (some drivers don't see what they don't expect to see)
- attention (concentration)
- tracking behaviour (driving slower and not in a straight line)

- In combination with alcohol, the impairment is multiplied.
- 11%-15% of drivers injured in accidents have cannabis in their blood.
- A Western Australian study found that 80% of those stopped for dangerous driving who had not been drinking alcohol had been smoking cannabis.

Reference : "Marijuana - An Australian Crisis", E. Walters.  
: "Talking about Marijuana", Alcohol & Drug Foundation, Vic.  
: "Cannabis and Your Health", A.M.A.  
: "Latest Research Results on Marijuana", Signal Press, USA.

Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Victoria, Inc.  
1st Floor, 15 Collins Street, Melbourne. 3000

5/96/AB



## MARIJUANA



Marijuana (grass, dope, pot) is prepared from the cannabis plant (Indian hemp) and is usually smoked, mixed with tobacco, in a hand-rolled cigarette called a reefer, joint or stick, or in specially designed pipes (bongs). Hash (hashish) is produced from cannabis resin.

- It contains 421 known chemicals, 61 of which are only found in cannabis and are called **cannaboids**. The cannaboid most responsible for the emotional "high" - the feelings of relaxation and self-confidence and altered sense of taste, touch, smell and hearing- experienced by smokers, is delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).
- The intoxicating effects of one joint occur within seconds and can last for 3 hours.
- Effects on thinking and coordination can last up to 24 hours
- Short term memory loss can last for weeks.
- Cannaboids accumulate in the fatty section of body cells including the **brain** and **reproductive organs**.
- It takes up to **30 days** for all the chemicals in a single joint to clear from the body.
- Regular cannabis users can be under its influence at any time and be unaware of the dangers of this.

# THE PHYSICAL EFFECTS OF CANNABIS USE

## BRAIN

- messages between the brain and body are slowed
- can cause manic depression, psychosis and schizophrenia in susceptible people
- short term memory loss
- impairs judgement, coordination, and concentration
- drowsiness, hallucinations, apathy, decreases motivation, energy and ability to learn
- can lead to psychological dependence and probably, physical dependence

## Immune System

- a lowering of the white blood cell immune response



Vision is affected.

Increased risk of cancers of mouth, throat and airways.

HEART rate and blood pressure increase during smoking.

## LUNGS : risk of

- cancer
- respiratory disease
- emphysema
- bronchitis
- asthma

Stomach -nausea and vomiting may occur

## Reproductive Organs

Reduces fertility and sex drive.

May damage foetus.