**Marijuana**

**In 2001, just 4.1 percent of adults admitted using marijuana, but by 2013 -- a year after Washington and Colorado became the first two states to legalize the drug for recreational use -- that figure had increased to 9.5 percent. *(WashingtonPost.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, November 6, 2015)***

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**More than 155 million Americans – nearly half of the nation’s population – now live in states where adult marijuana use has been legalized. After Maryland and Missouri passed referendums last week, 21 states now allow legal weed, 10 years after the first referendums were passed, in Washington and Colorado. Voters in Arkansas, North Dakota, and South Dakota decisively rejected recreational legalization measures. *(Politico, as it appeared in The Week magazine, November 25, 2022)***

**Americans spent some $30 billion on legal marijuana last year. By comparison, $28 billion was spent on craft beer, $20 billion on chocolate, and $7 billion on ice cream. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, September 29, 2023)***

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**In 2011, 663,032 people were arrested in the U.S. for marijuana possession -- 128,328 more than were arrested for all violent crimes combined. *(HuffingtonPost.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 1, 2013)***

**Nearly 620,000 people were arrested for simple marijuana possession across the U.S. in 2014, according to the FBI, despite relaxed laws in many states. That's more than 1,700 weed arrests per day. *(HuffingtonPost.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, October 9, 2015)***

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**In Janesville, Wis., an 8-year-old was suspended from his second-grade class when each student was asked to bring something to the classroom for discussion and he brought a bag of marijuana from his mother’s car. *(Bill Flick, 1996)***

**What weed has wrought in California: “When the weed wagon reaches your state, filled with false hopes and dubious promises of smoking one’s way to prosperity,” take a hard look at California, said the Washington Examiner. The state legalized recreational marijuana use by referendum in 2016, with advocates promising it would “squeeze the illegal trade out of business.” But as a Los Angeles Times investigation revealed last week, “the exact opposite is happening now: It has spread crime out into the rural areas and turned local politics across the state into a morass of corruption.” Local politicians are now demanding six-figure bribes from the cannabis industry for growing licenses and legislative support. Meanwhile, as the use of weed becomes more widespread, “illegal and completely unregulated” growing operations have popped up across California, overwhelming local law enforcement. “Heavily armed camps filled with violent armed men, often tied to cartels, now dot the countryside.” So much illegal marijuana is being grown and sold that cannabisprices are plunging, and “the legal trade is now threatened.” So, before more states vote to legalize recreational weed, “people need to be warned about what the marijuana legalization craze has done to California.” *(The Week magazine, September 30, 2022)***

**College graduates account for only about 17 percent of marijuana use. About 76 percent is consumed by adults who never attended college or dropped out. "Most of the marijuana market is more Walmart than Whole Foods," says Carnegie Melton University professor Jonathan Caulkins, author of a new analysis of weed use. *(WashingtonPost.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 27, 2015)***

**Legal Colorado marijuana vendors sell about $200 million of weed every year, to 100,000 state residents who've gotten prescriptions for medical reasons. Colorado is one of three states (with Washington and Oregon) that will vote in November on a referendum on full legalization of marijuana. *(Newsweek, as it appeared in The Week magazine, November 2, 2012)***

**A Nebraska man was fined $100 for marijuana possession after police searched his car and found his stash hidden in a container labeled "not weed." Sheriff Terry Wagner said that his deputies stopped the 21-year-old man on suspicion of driving drunk and discovered a pot-filled sour cream tub under a passenger seat. The words "not weed" were written in marker on the plastic container's lid. "We call that a clue," said Wagner. *(The Week magazine, March 20, 2015)***

**The science of the munchies: The munchies, the craving for food that is one of marijuana's signal effects, are triggered by a heightened sense of smell. Researchers at the University of Bordeaux reached that conclusion after studying how THC, marijuana's active ingredient, affects the brains of mice. The substance activates cannabinoid receptors and sharpens the animals' ability to smell, neuroscientist Giovanni Marsicano tells NationalPost.com, indicating that "the impact of marijuana on olfaction might be determinant for its effect on food intake." The researchers found that the same receptors are activated in starving mice, suggesting that THC tricks the brain into feeling hungry by mimicking sensations that occur when it's deprived of food. Mice that had been injected with THC sniffed -- and kept on sniffing -- banana and almond oils, while regular mice lost interest after a short while. The THC-dosed mice also ate more when given the chance. University of Calgary neuroscientist Jaideep Bains said that if the mechanism occurs in humans, it could open the way to drugs that fight obesity by interfering with the cannabinoid system. "If you are eating a lot, perhaps that olfactory system is in overdrive," he says. *(The Week magazine, February 28, 2014)***

**The dangers of edible marijuana: Pot-infused brownies, gummy bears, and other cannabis “edibles” are often portrayed as a fun and harmless way to ingest cannabis, but a new study suggests that eating weed may be more dangerous than smoking or vaping the drug. Researchers looked at thousands of marijuana-related emergency room visits in Denver from 2014, when the drug was legalized in Colorado, to 2016, reports The New York Times. While edibles represented only 0.3 percent of the total weight sold of THC – the psychoactive compound in weed – they accounted for 10 percent of cannabis-linked ER admissions. Patients displayed markedly different symptoms depending on how they’d consumed the drug. Nearly half of the patients who’d taken edibles complained of intoxication, compared with less than a third of those who’d smoked marijuana. Those who used edibles were also more likely to experience acute psychiatric symptoms and cardiovascular issues such as an irregular heartbeat. The scientists say the most likely reason for the disparity is that ingested weed takes longer to produce a high than smoked cannabis does, so users think the drug isn’t working and take more. Lead author Andrew Monte notes that the only three deaths in Colorado that have been definitively linked to marijuana – two suicides and a murder – all involved edibles. “States moving to liberalize cannabis policy,” he says, “should consider keeping edibles out of the recreational marketplace. *(The Week magazine, April 12, 2019)***

**Some 4.1 million marijuana plants were destroyed by local, state, and federal authorities in 2015. That cannabis eradication program costs $18 million a year. *(WashingtonPost.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 29, 2016)***

**For the first time, the number of Americans who use marijuana just about every day has exceeded the number who drink alcohol that frequently, according to national survey data. Nearly 18 million Americans reported using marijuana daily or near daily in 2022, compared with 15 million daily or near-daily drinkers. In 1992, fewer than 1 million people said they used weed daily. *(Associated Press, as it appeared in The Week magazine, June 7, 2024)***

**One of the reasons marijuana is illegal today is because cotton growers in the 1930s lobbied against hemp farmers – they saw hemp as competition. It is not chemically addictive, as is nicotine, alcohol, or caffeine. *(Noel Botham, in The Book of Useless Information, p. 153)***

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**Marijuana's impact on teens: A large new study has found that teenagers who smoke marijuana daily are 60 percent less likely to complete high school and seven times more likely to attempt suicide. In one of the largest projects of its kind, researchers gathered data on the cannabis use of 3,725 students from Australia and New Zealand, and monitored them for seven developmental outcomes up to age 30. Controlling for various factors, including socioeconomic status, use of other drugs, and mental issues, they found "clear and consistent associations" between regular cannabis use and high school and college graduation rates, suicide attempts, other illicit drug use, and cannabis dependency. Significantly, they also found that the risks of negative outcomes increased with the frequency of cannabis use. "The findings are timely given movement in some states in the U.S. and Latin America to decriminalize marijuana," lead author Edmund Silins, tells TheGuardian.com. "Because our study has shown the potential harms of adolescent use, particularly heavy use, policymakers must be aware of this, and reform efforts should be carefully considered to protect against this." *(The Week magazine, September 26, 2014)***

**Marijuana's impact on thinking: Even casual marijuana use can change your brain. New research has determined that smoking pot just a few times a week physically alters critical neural structures. The study, which focused on young adults, raises concerns that young users could be permanently damaging their still-developing minds. "We've known that people who use marijuana when they're young tend to have cognitive abnormalities, but this gives us direct evidence," Stuart Gitlow of the American Society of Addiction Medicine, tells The Boston Globe. Researchers looked at the brains in 40 people ages 18 to 25 -- 20 of whom smoked about six joints per week and 20 of whom didn't smoke at all. The scans revealed volume, shape, and density changes in two key regions -- the nucleus accumbens and the amygdala -- that are involved with emotion, motivation, and decision-making. "This is a part of the brain you do not want to mess around with," says Northwestern University psychiatrist Hans Breiter. The more marijuana that users smoked, the more their brains differed from nonusers. Researchers say the changes may be linked to behaviors like lack of focus and impaired judgment, which can become problematic with prolonged marijuana use. *(The Week magazine, May 2, 2014)***

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**Legal sales of marijuana are expected to top $33 billion by the end of 2022 – a 32 percent increase over 2021’s total of $25 billion. *(Fortune, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 22, 2022)***

**Scientists at the University of California, San Diego have confirmed that lobsters are sedated by marijuana, in a study that was inspired by a Maine restaurateur who got the creatures stoned before boiling them alive. Charlotte Gill of Charlotte's Legendary Lobster Pound said it made a "dramatic difference" when she put the lobsters in a sealed chamber and then pumped in weed smoke. Not only were the lobsters much more relaxed when they were put in the pot, she said, their meat was "sweeter and lighter, because it doesn't have the same stress hormone." The scientists found that stoned lobsters acted extremely relaxed. *(The Week magazine, July 2, 2021)***

**Pot's mind-altering properties: Marijuana is more potent than ever, and new research suggests that smoking it has a bigger impact on developing brains than previously thought, reports The New York Times. The Drug Enforcement Administration has found that the concentration of THC -- marijuana's psychoactive compound -- in weed increased from an average of 3.75 percent in 1995 to 13 percent in 2013. This increased potency, say scientists, is causing structural changes in the brains of young users. Researchers at Harvard and Northwestern Universities looked at brain scans of 20 college students who smoked pot four times a week on average and found that all of them showed abnormalities in the shape, density, and volume of the nucleus accumbens -- the walnut-shaped area of the brain associated with pleasure and pain. While THC is known to disrupt focus, memory, decision making and motivation for up to 24 hours, the structural changes could have longer-term effects. The nucleus accumbens "is at the core of motivation, the core of pleasure and pain," said study co-author Has Breiter. "If I were to design a substance that is bad for college students, it would be marijuana." *(The Week magazine, November 21, 2014)***

**A man in Colorado wants marijuana to be classified as a vegetable. I just have to say that's an ingenious way to get Americans to stop smoking pot. *(Conan O'Brien)***

**"I don't think it is more dangerous than alcohol." *(Barack Obama, to the New Yorker, on marijuana use, endorsing the laws legalizing it in Colorado and Washington -- though he has told his daughters he thinks smoking pot is "a bad idea,” as it appeared in Time magazine, February 3, 2014)***

**In the 17 states with a medical-marijuana law in place by 2013, prescriptions for painkillers and other classes of drugs fell sharply. In medical-marijuana states, the average doctor prescribed 265 fewer doses of antidepressants each year, 486 fewer doses of seizure medication, 541 fewer anti-nausea doses, and 562 fewer doses of anti-anxiety medication -- and 1,826 fewer doses of painkillers in a given year. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, July 29, 2016)***

**In El Paso, Texas, a man so worried by the peculiar actions of his pet rabbits that he flagged down police, admitted a reason might be because he accidentally fed them some of his marijuana. *(Bill Flick, 1993)***

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**Professional pot farmers run an estimated 2,000 to 4,000 operations that grow marijuana legally. According to an industry publication, the legal pot-farming industry raked in total sales of more than $1.2 billion in 2012*. (The Wall Street Journal, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 10, 2013)***

**In the first month since Colorado legalized recreational marijuana, licensed dispensaries have generated more than $14 million in sales. That includes $2 million of tax revenue, which -- when combined with fees and taxes on medical marijuana sales -- will put $3.5 million in the state's coffers. *(HuffingtonPost.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 21, 2014)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\** There are now more marijuana dispensaries in Colorado than there are Starbucks coffee shops. *(The Economist, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 2, 2016)***

**Good week for: Targeted marketing, after a California Girl Scout managed to sell a staggering 300 boxes of Girl Scout Cookies in only six hours, by positioning herself outside a San Diego marijuana dispensary. *(The Week magazine, February 16, 2018)***

**George Washington grew marijuana in his garden. *(Noel Botham, in The Book of Useless Information, p. 2)***

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