**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)***

**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 week arrests per day. *(HuffingtonPost.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, October 9, 2015)***

**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)***

**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)***

**"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")***

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

**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)***

**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)***

**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)***

**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 included $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)***

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

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