MARIJUANA:
Get the Facts

Natural, but not harmless.
- Marijuana use contributes to health problems
- It is four times stronger than in the 1980s
- It is risky no matter how you use it (smoking, vaporizing, or edibles [food containing marijuana])
- Heavy use in young adults can cause lasting damage to the brain and decrease intelligence
- Marijuana can directly worsen symptoms of anxiety, depression, and schizophrenia

Marijuana can be addictive.
- Marijuana use can lead to addiction, just like with other drugs
- 4.5 million people in the U.S. are addicted
- The chances of addiction are increased in adolescents (17%) and people who use every day (25-50%)
- Withdrawal symptoms include cravings, trouble sleeping, anxiety, and appetite loss

Marijuana use impairs driving.
- Using marijuana doubles a driver's risk of an accident
- Using marijuana with alcohol increases the risk of an accident

Legal does not mean safer.
- Marijuana is not FDA-approved
- There may be some chemicals in marijuana that help a range of illnesses or symptoms, but there is not enough research that shows marijuana's benefits
- The benefits do not outweigh the health risks

Marijuana and pregnancy.
- Marijuana use during pregnancy affects child development
- Health risks for the child include low birth weight; premature birth; problems with attention, memory, and problem solving; and reduced IQ

Using marijuana with other substances.
- Mixing marijuana and alcohol increases risk for nausea and reactions of panic, anxiety, or paranoia
- People who smoke both marijuana and tobacco have more health problems
- Mixing tobacco and marijuana increases risk of developing respiratory diseases and/or cancer

Tips for Cutting Back

Think about changing.
- Why do you use? What do you like about it?
- Why do you want to cut down or stop?

Plan for the change you want.
- Set a goal and date for changing your use. Make it realistic.
- Share your plan with people you trust and ask for support.

Act on your decision.
- Distract and do something. Make a list of fun activities (not related to your marijuana use) and keep busy.
- Delay. Stop and think before using. Wait 15 minutes to ride the craving, and the wave of desire may pass.
- Plan ahead. Avoid high-risk situations and people who use.

Have a back-up plan.
- If you haven't achieved your goal yet, that's okay.
- Consider the situation in which you used and see what could be changed next time.
- Review your plan and see if it needs revising.

Helpful Links:
http://easyread.drugabuse.gov/marijuana-effects.php
http://www.drugfree.org/drug-guide/marijuana

Relaxation Alternatives:
3-Minute Breathing Space: http://umurl.us/GUi
Breathing and Relaxation Exercise: http://umurl.us/AMF
Body Scan Meditation: http://umurl.us/B0dyScan

MARIJUANA: Effects on the Body

Problems with coordination, judgment, learning, memory, reaction time, sensory perception, sleeping

Panic/anxiety, depression, paranoia, lack of motivation, mood swings

Cancer of the head and neck

Increased blood pressure and heart rate, risk of heart attack

Respiratory problems, asthma attacks, infections, emphysema

Weight gain, weakened immune system, chronic fatigue

During pregnancy: less oxygen to fetus; premature birth; drug via placenta, umbilical cord, and breast milk; low birth weight; early lung problems

In men: low sex drive, low testosterone, low sperm production, erectile dysfunction, increased breast growth, testicular cancer

In women: low sex drive, irregular periods, fertility problems

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