Marijuana, Inhalants, and Steroids

Chapter 23 Lesson 3
Marijuana

- Marijuana, the common name for the Indian hemp plant Cannabis, is a plant whose leaves, buds, and flowers are smoked for their intoxicating effects.

- It is one of the most widely used illegal drugs, and is also known as grass, weed or pot. Hashish, or hash is a stronger form of marijuana.

- It is often the first drug teens experiment with after alcohol.
Marijuana

- Contains 421 chemicals, including THC (d-alpha-tetrahydrocannabinol) *the main psychoactive ingredient*
- THC gets stored in body fat and can be traced in blood after it has been used
Contrary to popular opinion, this drug is not harmless.

All forms of marijuana are mind altering and can damage the user’s health.

When combined with other drugs, marijuana can be deadly.
As with other mood-altering drugs, marijuana raises levels of a brain chemical called dopamine. This chemical produces a pleasurable feeling. When the drug wears off, the pleasure sensation stops, often dramatically called a “crash.”

Marijuana also interferes with the immune system, so the user becomes more susceptible to infections.
Eyes:
- Reddening
- Decreased intra-ocular pressure

Mouth:
- Dryness

Skin:
- Sensation of heat or cold

Heart:
- Increased heart rate

Muscles:
- Relaxation

Effects of Marijuana on the Body
Risks to Mental/Emotional Health

- Marijuana users experience slow mental reflexes and suffer sudden feelings of anxiety and paranoia, an irrational suspiciousness or distrust of others.
- The user may feel dizzy, have trouble walking and have difficulty remembering events that just happened.
- Users often experience distorted perception, loss of coordination, and trouble with thinking and problem solving.
Risks to Growth and Development

- For teens, marijuana poses physical risks to the reproductive organs.
- In males, regular use interferes with sperm production and lowers levels of testosterone.
- Females experience the opposite effect, an increase in testosterone levels which may lead to unwanted facial hair and can lead to infertility.
Risks and Consequences of Driving Under the Influence

- Driving under the influence of marijuana can be dangerous as driving under the influence of alcohol because marijuana interferes with depth perception, impairs judgment, and slows reflexes.
- The penalties and legal consequences of driving under the influence of any drug, including marijuana, are strict.
Inhalants

- Inhalants are substances whose fumes are sniffed and inhaled to achieve a mind-altering effect
- Most inhalants go immediately to the brain, causing damage and actually killing brain cells that will never be replaced
- Inhalants include solvents and aerosols such as glues, spray paints, gasoline and varnishes
- All inhalants are extremely dangerous, and many are labeled as poisons.
Anabolic-Androgenic Steroids

- Anabolic-Androgenic steroids are synthetic substances that are similar to the male sex hormone testosterone.
  - Anabolic means muscle building and Androgenic refers to increased male characteristics.
  - Under a doctor’s guidance, these substances, help build muscles in patients with chronic diseases.
  - Steroid use can cause mood swings; impaired judgment resulting from feelings of invincibility; and paranoia.
Legal and Social Consequences of Steroid Use

- All steroid use other than that prescribed by a licensed physician is illegal and dangerous.
- Although steroids can increase muscle strength, the associated tendons and ligaments don’t get stronger.
- This discrepancy can result in injuries that take a long time to heal and can end an athlete’s career.
- Athletes who fail a drug test for steroids can face exclusion from events, expulsion from the team, monetary fines, and jail time.