**Marijuana**

*Definition:* Marijuana is the dried leaves and flowering tops of the cannabis plant which yields TCH (tetrahydrocannabinol) and is consumed for its intoxicating effect.

*Source:* Marijuana comes from hemp, a type of cannabis plant. The plant’s leaves and flowers are dried and then usually rolled into a cigarette or cooked into food. Hemp is grown in a sunny climate.

*History:* Marijuana is the most commonly used illegal drug in the United States. Its use declined in the 2000’s, but use is starting to increase, especially among young adults. The perception of the drug’s having harmful effects has lessened, which has caused a movement to make marijuana legal in the United States. In Colorado and Washington it has been successful. It has also been legalized for medical use in 21 states. As time has gone on, the concentration of TCH in marijuana samples taken by police has increased.

*Short-Term Effects:*

* Rapid heart rate
* Increased blood pressure
* Increased breathing rate
* Red eyes
* Hunger (munchies)
* Slowed reaction time
* Altered mood
* Difficulty with problem solving
* Higher risk of heart attack

*Long-Term Risks of Use:*

* Enduring cough
* Heightened risk of lung infections
* Lung cancer
* Depression
* Personality disturbances

*Famous Marijuana Addict:* Robert Downey Jr. supposedly started smoking marijuana at the age of eight. He struggled with addiction from 1996 to 2001, when he finally got clean. He went unsuccessfully through various drug treatment programs and facilities during that time.

*Helpful Website:* <http://www.cannabisrehab.org/>

*Local Rehab Facility:* Carlson Recovery Center; 471 Chestnut St, Springfield, Massachusetts; (413) 784-3971; <http://www.baystatehealth.com/>

**Alcohol**

*Definition:* Alcohol is a clear liquid that has a strong smell, that is used in some medicines and other products, and that is the substance in liquors (such as beer, wine, or whiskey) that can make a person drunk.

*Source:* Alcohol usually comes from the fermentation of grains, such as wheat, barley, rye, or corn. The grain is first boiled in water, the results from which are mixed with malt. Yeast is then added to finish the process.

*History:* Alcoholic beverages have existed since approximately 10,000 B.C.E, according to beer jugs found from that time period. Alcohol became more widely used starting during the Roman rule, and steadily rose, until during the Middle Ages consumption was up to 3 pints a day per person. In 1920, Prohibition was introduced and was in effect until 1933 when it was repealed.

*Short-Term Effects:*

* Decrease in fine motor skills
* Exaggerated behaviors
* Decreased reaction time
* Slurred speech
* Staggering
* Mental impairment
* Unconciousness
* Nausea/vomiting

*Long-Term Risks:*

* Esophegeal/mouth cancer
* Liver failure
* Dementia
* Stroke
* Heart attack
* Arterial disease
* Metabolic syndrome
* Osteoporosis

*Alcoholic Family Member:* My uncle was an extreme alcoholic for many years. He and his wife almost got divorced because of it. He finally started to go to Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, and has been clean for more than 15 years. He never has any alcohol (even a sip), because he’s worried that any could get him back on the wagon.

*Helpful Website:* Alcoholics Anonymous: <http://www.aa.org/>

*Local Rehab Facility:* Springfield Rehab Center; 143 Main St, Springfield, MA, 01108; (413) 320-4939

**Phencyclidene**

*Definition:* A type of tranquilizer used as a veterinary anesthetic and illegally used as a psychedelic drug. Also called PCP or angel dust.

*Source:* Phencyclidene is a syntehtic chemical made in laboratories, or illicitly taken from veterinarian clinics. It is a compound made from piperdidne, cyanide, and cyclohaxanone which is reacted with phenylmagnesium bromide to make the final product. It takes technical knowledge of chemicals to make.

*History:* Phencyclidene was first made in the 1950’s, and grew to a near epidemic in the 1960’s, lasting until around 1980. It has a much shorter history than most drugs, since it is synthetic and was not possible to make until modern tools were available.

*Short-Term Effects:*

* Euphoria
* Calmness
* Feelings of strength and invulnerability
* Disorientation
* Impaired concentration
* Memory loss
* Combativeness or violence
* Hallucinations
* Profuse sweating

*Long-Term Risks:*

* Suicide
* Homicide
* Self-mutilation
* Memory loss
* Weight loss
* Speech impediments
* Mood disorders

*Famous Phencyclidene Addict:* I was not able to find any famous people who were addicted to PCP, however, I did come across one who died partially from a PCP overdose. Anissa Jones, a child actor, died at the age of 18 from the combined effects of cocaine, PCP, Quaaludes, and Seconal.

*Helpful Website:* <http://www.recoveryconnection.org/pcp-addiction-withdrawal/>

*Local PCP Rehab Facility:* Carlson Recovery Center; 471 Chestnut St, Springfield, Massachusetts; (413) 784-3971; <http://www.baystatehealth.com/>

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Note: websites which were used for multiple drugs were only placed on the bibliography once.