

# Marijuana Ingestion

## 3 Ways Marijuana Is Used



As legalized medical and recreational marijuana has spread across the country, so, too, has the availability and forms of various marijuana and marijuana-related products.<sup>1</sup> Marijuana can, and is, being ingested in more ways than ever, so it's important to understand ingestion – especially when it comes to how quickly it enters, and exits, a person's system.

In general, marijuana may stay in a person's system for several days, weeks, or months, depending on age, gender, body mass, form of ingestion, frequency of use, potency of the product, and other factors. Even if the major effects of marijuana taper off quickly, others, such as memory problems or trouble sleeping, can last for days. For chronic users, some effects may be permanent.<sup>2</sup>

**1. Smoking:** Smoking is the most common form of marijuana use. Because the plant's THC and other compounds move through the lungs into the bloodstream, users experience its effects almost immediately. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency reports that in marijuana cigarette samples it seized, the level of THC averaged 15%.

### EFFECTS<sup>3</sup>

- Appear quickly, about 15-30 minutes after ingestion
- Taper off after 1-3 hours
- 1 ounce of marijuana yields 84 cigarette-sized joints
- 1 joint equals about 4 hours of intoxication

**2. Edibles:** Oral ingestion includes edible foods and beverages, tinctures, capsules, and oils. Because of the natural digestive process, eating or drinking edibles slightly delays the effects of marijuana. People may consume more in order to "hurry up" the effects. The result? Unintentional ingestion of very high doses, resulting in such negative effects as anxiety, paranoia, agitation, and even extreme psychotic reaction.<sup>4</sup>

## How Long Does Marijuana Stay In Your System?

Cannabis metabolites are fat-soluble, which means they're stored in the fatty tissue of the body and, therefore, stay in your system longer. Testing/sampling measures these metabolites, and because urine produces a higher concentration of them, it has a longer detection time.<sup>6</sup>

### Length of Time Marijuana is Detectable in Urine After Last Use

FREQUENCY OF USE	USER CLASSIFICATION	#DAYS DETECTABLE
UP TO 3X WEEK	OCCASIONAL	3
4X/WEEK	MODERATE	5-7
DAILY	CHRONIC	10-15
MULTIPLE TIMES/DAY	CHRONIC, HEAVY	30+

THE LONGEST REPORTED DETECTION TIMES ARE 90+ DAYS.

## EFFECTS

- 30-60 minutes after ingestion
- Less THC goes to the bloodstream with edibles vs. smoking
- May remain in the system longer than smoked marijuana
- Edibles include infused soft drinks, teas, coffee, and beer marketed
- Marijuana-infused beverages may cause red eyes, dry mouth, increased appetite, rapid breathing, increased heart rate, and elevated blood pressure<sup>5</sup>

**3. Vaping:** Vaping, also known as dabbing, is a fast-growing trend in which the user smokes the oil, concentrate, or extract of the marijuana plant. Teens, especially, are into dabbing, likely for its higher potency and effect. In addition to having high levels of THC, users inhale the substance in a single breath. The result is super-fast delivery of large amounts of THC. Exposure to high doses and concentrations of THC increase a person's risk for dependency and addiction.

Dabbing is particularly dangerous because of the nature of the heating process, which can result in exposure to noxious chemicals, burns, fires, or explosions. Dabbing also can lead to such short-term effects as anxiety, heart palpitations, and panic attacks.<sup>7</sup>

There are many forms of extracts that can be inhaled, including hash oil, budder, wax, and shatter. These extracts can have 3 to 5 times more THC than the plant itself.<sup>8</sup>

## EFFECTS<sup>9</sup>

- Higher concentrations of THC (39-60%, up to 80%) are more likely to produce anxiety, agitation, paranoia, or psychosis
- Concentrates may contain harmful contaminants
- Extraction process may involve the use of potentially explosive solvents
- Risk of physical dependence and addiction increases

## About This Campaign

Because much of the public conversation surrounding marijuana has been based on anecdotes rather than science, Prevention Action Alliance and the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services created this campaign to help people better understand the facts about marijuana and its effects.

If you found this article helpful, we encourage you to share it with others. You can also find other fact sheets about marijuana at: [preventionactionalliance.org/marijuana](http://preventionactionalliance.org/marijuana)

If you have concerns about your own use of marijuana or a loved one's, and wish to seek help, go to: [findtreatment.samhsa.gov/](http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/)

## Contact Us

For more information about marijuana use, please contact us at:

Prevention Action Alliance  
(614) 540-9985  
[preventionactionalliance.org](http://preventionactionalliance.org)

## About Us

Prevention  
Action Alliance



Prevention Action Alliance is a 501(c)3 nonprofit located in Columbus, Ohio. We're dedicated to leading healthy communities in the prevention of substance misuse and the promotion of mental health wellness. Learn more at [preventionactionalliance.org](http://preventionactionalliance.org).

The mission of the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) is to provide statewide leadership on the topics of mental health and addiction prevention, treatment, and recovery. Learn more about OhioMHAS at [mha.ohio.gov](http://mha.ohio.gov).

1. [hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/reports-and-publications/addiction-and-substance-misuse/advisory-on-marijuana-use-and-developing-brain/index.html](https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/reports-and-publications/addiction-and-substance-misuse/advisory-on-marijuana-use-and-developing-brain/index.html)
2. [healthline.com/health/how-long-does-weed-stay-in-your-system#factors-affecting-metabolization](https://www.healthline.com/health/how-long-does-weed-stay-in-your-system#factors-affecting-metabolization)
3. [drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana/what-are-marijuana-effects](https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana/what-are-marijuana-effects)
4. [cdc.gov/marijuana/faqs/edibles.html](https://www.cdc.gov/marijuana/faqs/edibles.html)

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8. [teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/marijuana](https://www.teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/marijuana)
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