

## Kids, Cars and Marijuana

Many young people are unconcerned about using marijuana and driving. Their attitudes and actions reflect this. According to ONDCP's "Steer Clear of Pot" campaign, which can be found at [www.TheAntiDrug.com](http://www.TheAntiDrug.com):

- ◆ Driving-age teens (16-19) are nearly four times more likely to have used marijuana in the past month than younger adolescents (12-15).
- ◆ 13.3 percent of 17 year olds reported driving under the influence of an illicit drug in the past year vs. 4.7% of the total population.
- ◆ The majority—68%—of licensed teen drivers who use drugs "regularly" report that they "drug and drive."

## Learn More About Drugs and Driving

It's important to become informed about the issue of drugged driving and talk with young people about the dangers and consequences of driving while under the influence of drugs. There are many resources available to educate both adults and young people. We can make a difference.

For more information on the national "Steer Clear of Pot" campaign visit:

[www.elks.org/drugs](http://www.elks.org/drugs)  
[www.theantidrug.com/steerclear/](http://www.theantidrug.com/steerclear/)  
[www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov)  
[www.dea.gov](http://www.dea.gov)

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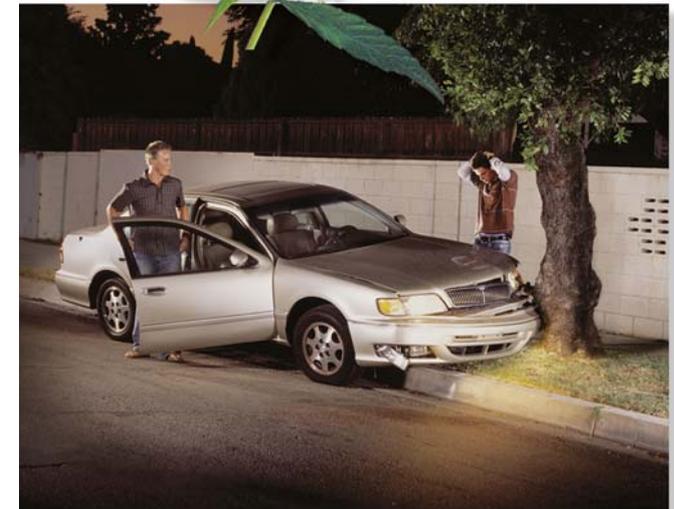
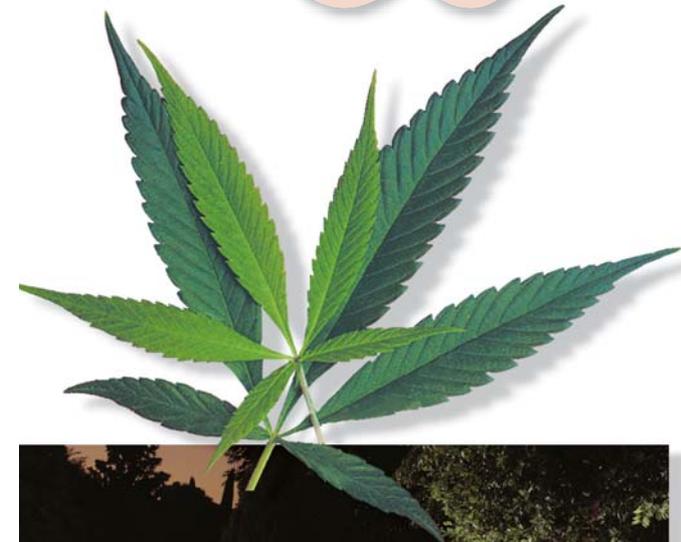
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Drug Awareness Program funding is provided by the Elks National Foundation, the charitable arm of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the USA. The Elks are committed to providing a healthy future for America's youth. In addition to educating young people about the dangers of drugs, the Elks provide positive alternatives such as the Hoop Shoot® and Soccer Shoot athletic programs and Youth Veteran Volunteers. The ENF also annually awards more than \$3.2 million in college scholarships. For more information, contact your local Elks Lodge or visit the Elks website at [www.elks.org/YouthActivities.cfm](http://www.elks.org/YouthActivities.cfm).

# Elks

NATIONAL DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM

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## What You Should Know About Drug-Impaired Driving

For years, Americans have been aware of the tragic problems caused by alcohol-impaired driving and the toll it takes on individuals, families and communities. Public awareness, increased law enforcement and community mobilization have had a powerful effect on the way we look at the issue, and over time attitudes and behavior have changed.

But many of us don't realize that impaired driving is not just an alcohol problem—it's drugs, too. And many people who are driving under the influence are our own kids. But it's not just users who are at risk—it's all of us, sharing the roads.

## Marijuana Use in America

Marijuana is the most widely used illegal drug in America, and today's marijuana is potent and harmful, especially to kids. Although the use of marijuana by young people has been significantly reduced, it's still a problem. According to the Office of National Drug Control Policy:

- ◆ Over 7 million Americans are dependent on drugs; over 60% of these abuse, or are dependent upon, marijuana;
- ◆ In 2003, 34.9% of 12th graders used marijuana in the past year;
- ◆ 62% of kids aged 12-17 admitted to drug treatment in 2002 were there because of marijuana—an increase of 20% over a seven-year period;
- ◆ According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the average age of marijuana initiates was 17 years.

## Marijuana and Driving

Many marijuana users—and those of us who drive on the same roads as they do—don't understand the dangers of mixing marijuana and driving. After alcohol, marijuana ranks as the highest-found drug in crash-involved drivers. According to a study cited by ONDCP, a roadside study of reckless drivers who were not under the influence of alcohol showed that one in three tested positive for

marijuana alone. An additional 18% tested positive for marijuana in combination with cocaine.

The effects of marijuana on drivers include:

- ◆ Relaxation, disorientation;
- ◆ Altered time and space perceptions;
- ◆ Drowsiness, sedation;
- ◆ Lack of concentration;
- ◆ Decreased car-handling performance;
- ◆ Impaired time and distance estimation;
- ◆ Increased reaction times;
- ◆ Impaired motor coordination.

***Marijuana can impair a driver's abilities for at least one or two hours after use, and residual effects can be found up to 24 hours. Marijuana has also been shown to increase the impairing effects of alcohol.***

In addition to marijuana, other drugs, including some over-the-counter medications, can impair a driver's ability to stay alert and focused.