

Fast Facts on Long-Term Marijuana Use and Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome

Long term regular use of marijuana can lead to a condition known as *Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome* (CHS). The primary symptoms of CHS is severe nausea and vomiting. In the brain, marijuana is known for preventing nausea and vomiting. However, in the digestive tract it can have the opposite effect by causing nausea and vomiting. People with CHS report that frequent hot showers can provide temporary relief from the nausea.

Early signs and symptoms of CHS include morning nausea and abdominal pain. People who use marijuana often increase use of the marijuana during this time, thinking that it will stop the nausea. This phase may last for months or years.

The progression of CHS leads to *hyperemesis*, which is characterized by intense and overwhelming nausea and vomiting, loss of appetite, and dehydration. Frequent hot showers can provide temporary relief of symptoms during this time by affecting the part of the brain that controls temperature and vomiting. At this point, people often seek medical attention.

Recovery from CHS begins when all symptoms subside and one can comfortably resume a normal diet. Symptoms may come back after the next use of marijuana.

While seeking *medical treatment* for CHS, one may be given or advised to do the following:

- Intravenous fluid replacement
- Anti-nausea medications
- Treatments for stomach inflammation
- Hot showers

The only treatment that will have a positive long term outcome is to discontinue any and all forms of marijuana use. If untreated, dehydration due to CHS can lead to a number of issues including seizures, muscle spasms or weakness, kidney failure and heart rhythm abnormalities. In rare cases, brain swelling can occur.

Since it may take several years to develop, the best way to prevent CHS is to refrain from marijuana use in any form. If you have questions or concerns about CHS, contact your healthcare provider.

Substance Use Information & Education Helpline: 1-800-327-5050. Find a treatment center at <http://helplinema.org>



The Plymouth County
Drug Abuse Task Force

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