Marijuana and sex [1]

Dear Alice,

Does the use of marijuana affect a person's sexual performance?

Answer

Dear Reader,

Whether it's sex, socializing, or skydiving, marijuana's affect on performance can vary. Pot is in a drug class by itself?neither considered a stimulant, nor a depressant, because its effects are in large part determined by the expectations of its users. If you anticipate or hope for a mellow, ride-with-the-tide, go-with-the-flow result from lighting up, that is probably what you will get. If a giggle-fest is your goal, then your tokes may well tickle your fancy. By the same token, marijuana, alcohol, and other drugs can also amplify one's pre-existing personality traits: paranoia; fearfulness; gregariousness; anxiety; aggressiveness, etc. And, these factors don't jump out the window when you jump into bed.

Aside from the variety of possible reactions, certain effects of pot use remain consistent. Smoking up impairs both coordination and judgment, much in the same way that alcohol use does. So, making safe and comfortable decisions about sexual behavior might be difficult, and interactions might be filled with a lot of fumbling. Let's face it: sex can take a lot of coordination, even while completely sober!

Above all, there is no way to predict how pot might influence your sexual relations, or those of anyone else, because of the interplay of individual expectations and differences. However, you and your partner can probably get more specific answers for yourselves by discussing and examining marijuana's role in your sex life. Is smoking pot an innocuous side-bar, used every now and then (legal considerations aside), or is it a third participant on which you depend? For some, sex itself is an anxiety-producing proposition, so they use pot to relax. Others might use weed with the mission of heightening sensitivity. Keeping in mind the powerful role that your mind plays in the action of pot and other drugs, relaxing and getting turned on can happen without bringing drugs into the bedroom. It is possible for a drug to become a crutch for behaviors, sex included. For some, these crutches can turn into necessary aides, resulting in unhealthy use and abuse.

One last note: long-term use of marijuana does seem to affect reproductive health. Marijuana can impact testosterone production and other hormones. This can in turn can affect fertility, erectile dysfunction, menstruation, and other areas. Also, heavy, long-term marijuana use can
either cause or contribute to low motivation and sex drive? for sure not on any pot smoker's wish list.

Alice!
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Alcohol & Other Drugs [2]
Marijuana, Hash, & Other Cannabis [3]

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