Seth’s Story

Seth was what many of his teachers and classmates called an “outsider.” He didn’t have a lot of friends his own age, so he hung out with older “potheads” who had already flunked out of high school. Seth, like so many of his classmates, knew how bad marijuana could be, but he desperately wanted friends to hang out with. At first, he started smoking weed just to feel some kind of acceptance. However, after smoking marijuana for a few months, he started to feel like he couldn’t cope without it.

One night, after smoking a couple of joints with the older guys, one of the guys in their group said he had the munchies. “Go pick up a pizza, Seth. We’ll all pay you back.” Seth knew they probably wouldn’t, but he went to the store anyway. He was definitely high, but he thought he was ok to drive. “I’ll just make sure I go extra slow and focus really hard,” Seth thought to himself. As he pulled up to a traffic light, it was green. Still, Seth slowed to a stop because he was paranoid that it would turn to red on him. Seth sat through a whole cycle, too stoned to move. Finally, another car drove up behind him and started flashing his lights and honking his horn. Panicking, Seth floored it through the intersection, but by that time, the light had turned red and he plowed into the side of a truck. Seth was lucky to only have a few scrapes from the wreck, but the driver of the other vehicle was killed on impact. When the police got there, they could smell the odor of marijuana on his clothes. Seth was arrested and booked with a DUI. He later served 10 years in jail and will have to live forever with the guilt of taking someone’s life.

The Truth About Marijuana

What do you know about smoking marijuana and driving? Test yourself here.

1. As long as you drive carefully, driving while under the influence of marijuana is okay.
   a. True b. False
2. Motor coordination, reaction time, visual function and judgment are all affected by smoking marijuana.
   a. True b. False
3. The risk of being involved in a car accident roughly doubles after marijuana use.
   a. True b. False
4. What is the main chemical component of marijuana?
   a. Carbon dioxide   b. Oxygen
c. THC   d. Acetic acid
5. Drinking alcohol while smoking marijuana will make you feel more sober.
   a. True b. False

Answers: 1. b; 2. a; 3. a; 4. c; 5. b
**DeADly CoMbinATionS**

People who smoke marijuana and have high amounts of THC in their blood are three to seven times more likely to be responsible for a car accident than drivers who are completely sober. Since many people, especially teens, make the mistake of mixing alcohol with marijuana, that probability of being responsible for an accident is even greater.

Smoking marijuana while drinking can also increase the way your body absorbs THC, which makes the high feel more intense. Likewise, THC can delay the peak of alcoholic impairment, which means it can take longer for a person using both substances to feel drunk. It is very serious to note, however, that feeling drunk and being drunk are not the same thing. You could potentially feel fine when you get behind the wheel of a car, but be way over the legal limit, putting yourself and others in danger.

**WHat CAn yOu Do?**

**Preventing Friends from Driving High**

The best way to prevent someone from driving while high is obvious; don’t smoke marijuana at all. If you’re in a situation where a friend is high and wants to drive home, here are some tips on how to stop them.

- If you can, take away their keys.
- Don’t start an argument.
- Suggest an alternate form of transportation—a cab, someone who hasn’t been smoking marijuana or drinking alcohol, or even public transportation.
- Explain that you don’t want them to drive because you care about them, and you don’t want them hurting themselves or anyone else.
- Get another sober friend to help you or to act as moral support. It’s usually harder to say “no” to two or three people than one person.