

Myth: Marijuana is a gateway to the use of more dangerous drugs.

Fact: Multiple studies have shown the fallacy of the gateway theory. Most recently, a study of 214 boys tracked their drug use patterns from age 10 up to 22. As published in the December 2006 *American Journal of Psychiatry*, researchers found that “adolescents who used marijuana prior to using other drugs, including alcohol and tobacco, were no more likely to develop a substance abuse disorder than other subjects in the study.” The study also found that “the likelihood that someone will transition to the use of illegal drugs is determined not by the preceding use of a particular drug, but instead by the user’s individual tendencies and environmental circumstances.”¹

Fact: According to the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, there is no proof that a causal relationship exists between cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana and other drugs. Basic scientific and clinical research establishing causality does not exist.²

Fact: “There is no conclusive evidence that the drug effects of marijuana are causally linked to the subsequent abuse of other illicit drugs.”³

1. Tarter, Ralph E., PhD, Vanyukov, Michael, PhD, Kirisci, Levent, PhD, Reynolds, Maureen, PhD, Clark, Duncan B., MD, PhD, "Predictors of Marijuana Use in Adolescents Before and After Licit Drug Use: Examination of the Gateway Hypothesis," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 63, No. 12, December 2006, p. 2138

2. Merrill, J.C. & Fox, K.S., *Cigarettes, Alcohol, Marijuana: Gateways to Illicit Drug Use*, Introduction (New York, NY: National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, October 1994).

3. Janet E. Joy, Stanley J. Watson, Jr., and John A Benson, Jr., "Marijuana and Medicine: Assessing the Science Base," Division of Neuroscience and Behavioral Research, Institute of Medicine (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1999).
