

## Marijuana vs. alcohol, a toss-up? Not so

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- Author/Byline: Robert Wallace, Copley News Service
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- Column: Robert WallaceADVICE FOR TEENS

Teens: Did you ever hear the argument that using marijuana is no worse than drinking alcohol? We receive many letters from teens who start their letters, "I use marijuana but my parents use alcohol, and one is as bad as the other..."

Not so. Recent arguments about accepting marijuana because it has become so prevalent ignores the fact that research on marijuana use portrays a far more frightening picture than that of alcohol, Dr. Miller Newton warns. Newton is president and clinical director of KIDS, a program that rescues adolescents who are out of control with drugs and/or alcohol and other compulsive behaviors.

Says Newton: "Marijuana is a 'dirty weed' with more than 430 separate chemical compounds, as compared to a single chemical compound in alcohol."

Professionals in countries that have a long history of use of cannabis products, such as Turkey and Jamaica, think we have lost our national sanity by permitting women and children to use marijuana, Newton reports.

According to Newton, the research indicates damage to every biological system of the human body and indicates serious vulnerability on the part of teens who are in a very fragile physical and psychological developmental period.

"It's no longer safe to be a teen-ager," Newton says. "Smaller numbers of kids are reaching the senior year of high school every year; juvenile crime and death are escalating at a rapid rate and 'happy days' no longer describes the teen-age passage."

Teens, always remember that it's much, much easier to say no and never start using any kind of drug, be it tobacco or alcohol, than it is to quit.

For Dr. Wallace's teen booklet, "Happiness or Despair," please send \$1 and a 39-cent stamped, large, self-addressed envelope to Dr. Wallace in care of The Tribune, P.O. Box 191, San Diego 92112.

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