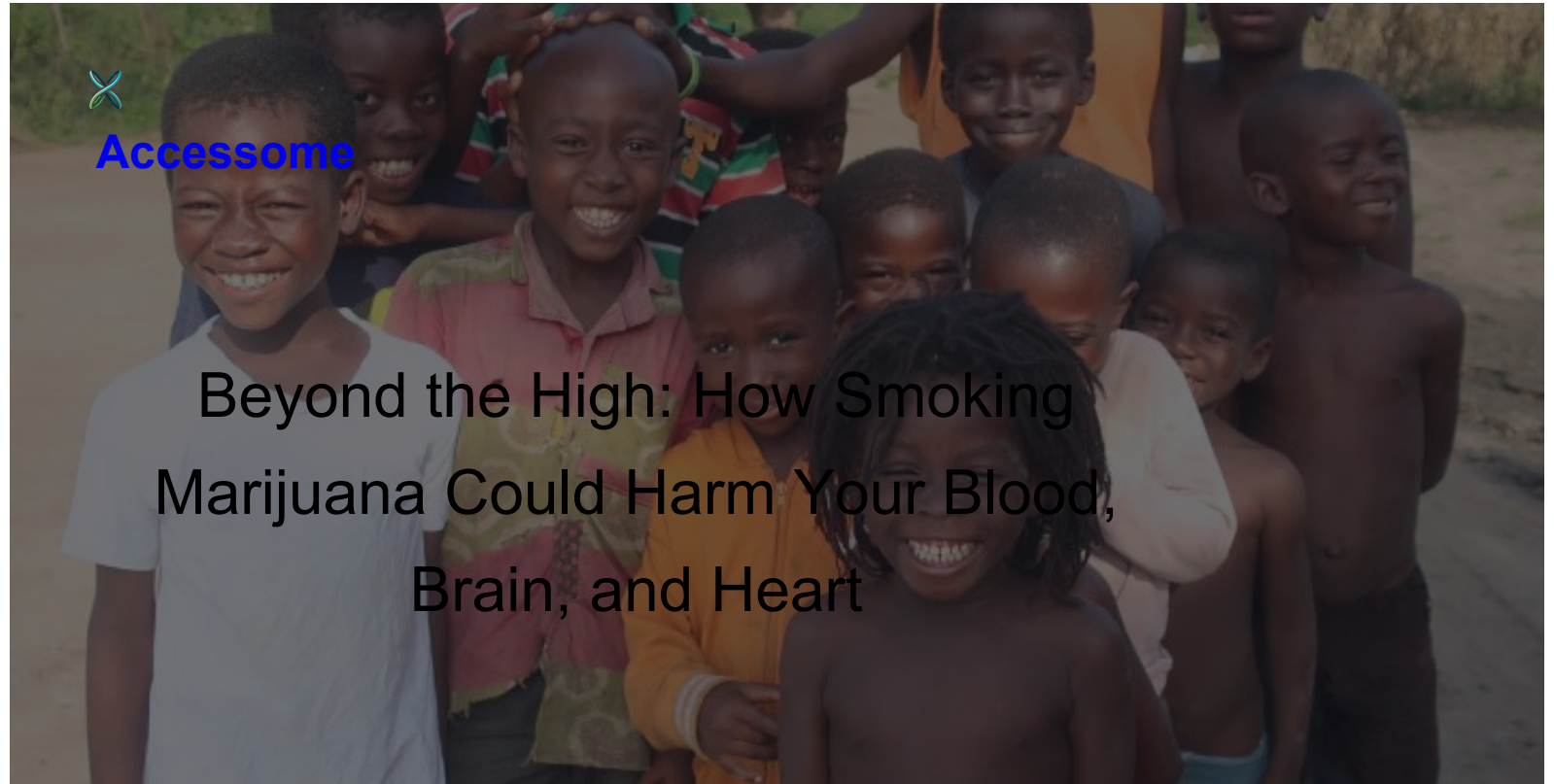




Rebecca Fleckenstein, MSN, RN - 31 August 2025 - 3:44 pm

IMAGE BY CHRISTOPHER WELSCH LEVERONI AT PEXELS

Smoking marijuana might carry hidden risks for your health. While many people use marijuana for recreational or medical use, scientists are learning more about how smoking it could affect your blood in unexpected ways. Just like tobacco, marijuana smoke can impact your heart and blood vessels—including possibly raising your risk for dangerous blood clots. Understanding these risks is

important, whether you use marijuana occasionally or regularly. Let's explore what you need to know to keep your health—and your blood—flowing safely.

Why do People Smoke Marijuana?

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reports that 158.8 million people used marijuana [worldwide](#) in 2021, with the majority of users living in the United States. Some reasons people smoke marijuana are:

- Relaxation
- Peer pressure
- Curiosity
- Boredom
- Stress relief
- Chronic pain

What Are Blood Clots?

Blood clots are a group of blood cells that form in your blood vessels to control bleeding.

Blood clots can form anywhere in your body. A deep vein thrombosis (DVT) is a blood clot that forms in the veins of your arms and legs. A pulmonary embolism (PE) is a blood clot that forms in your lungs. A blood clot that forms in the arteries of your brain can cause a stroke. Blood clots that form in your coronary (heart) arteries can cause a heart attack.

How Smoking Marijuana May Increase the Risk of Blood Clots

The [research](#) shows that people who smoke marijuana are at twice the risk of developing a DVT or PE than people who do not smoke marijuana. Research [studies](#) also show that smoking marijuana can increase the risk of heart attack and stroke, whether the person smokes tobacco and marijuana together or smokes marijuana alone.

Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) forms blood clots in your body by

causing the platelets – disc-shaped cells – in your blood to start creating a blood clot, by making your blood vessels narrower, or by causing a buildup of plaque in your blood vessels.

How smoking marijuana forms blood clots in your body is still being studied, and the understanding of this issue continues to grow.

Risk Factors for Blood Clots

Some factors that increase the risk of blood clots for marijuana smokers are:

- Smoking tobacco
- Using alcohol and street drugs
- Genetic disorders, like Factor V
- Older adults
- Young adults
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Smoking marijuana after surgery

Signs and Symptoms of Blood Clots

Some signs and symptoms of blood clots are:

- Swelling, pain, and redness in one arm or leg that comes on suddenly
- Warmth to the affected area
- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Coughing up blood

It is important to go to your doctor or the Emergency Department if you have any of these signs of a blood clot.

Precautions and Harm Reduction

Talk to your doctor if you smoke marijuana and are taking blood thinners or heart medications.

Do not drink alcohol if you choose to smoke marijuana.

Learn about the symptoms of blood clots and seek medical attention if you think you might have a blood clot.

Stay healthy by eating a variety of healthy foods, exercising regularly, and taking your medications.

If you use marijuana and are concerned about your risk for blood clots, talk to your healthcare provider. They can help you understand your risk and provide guidance on ways to stay healthy.

Author



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Rebecca is an informatics nurse specialist and an aspiring freelance writer. She creates health content using her 29 years of nursing knowledge and experience.



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