



Understanding Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome (CHS)

Ages: 13-21

Length: 45–60 minutes

Workshop Objectives:

By the end of this session, participants will:

1. Understand what CHS is and how it affects the body.
2. Learn the risks associated with long-term marijuana use.
3. Identify signs and symptoms of CHS.
4. Explore strategies for prevention and quitting.
5. Be able to answer key knowledge-check questions.

Workshop Structure

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

- Icebreaker: “What’s something you’ve heard about marijuana—true or not?”
- Explain that today’s topic isn’t about judging but learning about a serious condition caused by heavy marijuana use.

2. What is CHS? (10 minutes)

Key Teaching Points:

- CHS stands for Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome.
- It’s a rare condition found in people who use marijuana daily over a long time.
- Causes repeated, severe vomiting and stomach pain.



Discussion Question:

Q: "Why might someone not realize marijuana is causing their health issues?"

A: "Because they may have used it for years without problems, or they believe it helps with nausea."

3. The Science Behind CHS (10 minutes)

Key Teaching Points:

- THC (the chemical in marijuana) affects both the brain and digestive system.
- At first, it may reduce nausea, but over time it can do the opposite.
- Hot showers may help because of how they affect the hypothalamus (part of the brain).

Quick Quiz:

1. **Q:** What are the three phases of CHS?

A: Prodromal, Hyperemetic, and Recovery.

2. **Q:** What unusual behavior do many CHS patients report?

A: Taking many hot showers each day to relieve nausea.

4. Symptoms & Diagnosis (10 minutes)

Key Symptoms:

- Nausea (especially in the morning)
- Severe vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Dehydration
- Weight loss

Diagnosis involves:

- Ruling out other causes (like infection or pregnancy)
- History of daily marijuana use
- Relief of symptoms when marijuana is stopped

Activity:

Split into small groups. Each group creates a short skit showing someone with CHS symptoms trying to explain their condition to a doctor.



5. Treatment and Recovery (10 minutes)

- Treatment includes:
- IV fluids for dehydration
- Medicines to stop vomiting
- Hot showers or capsaicin cream

Most importantly: *quitting marijuana*

True/False Quiz:

1. **Q:** CHS symptoms always go away within hours of quitting marijuana.
A: False. It may take days or weeks.
2. **Q:** Marijuana helps all people with nausea.
A: False. It may cause nausea in long-term users with CHS.
3. **Q:** A hot shower is a permanent cure for CHS.
A: False. It's temporary relief; quitting marijuana is the only solution.

6. Prevention and Support (5 minutes)

Prevention Tips:

- Avoid daily marijuana use.
- Recognize early warning signs.
- Seek support: counselors, doctors, support groups.

Support Options:

- Cognitive behavioral therapy
- Family therapy
- Rehab or substance use counseling

Discussion Question:

Q: What would you say to a friend who thinks marijuana is harmless?

A: [Encourage youth to respond with what they learned, e.g., "It might seem that way, but heavy use can seriously mess with your stomach and cause non-stop vomiting."]



Wrap-up Activity (5 minutes)

“CHS Jeopardy”; or Kahoot Game

- Use questions from earlier in the workshop for a fun quiz competition!

Optional Handouts:

- CHS Fact Sheet
- “10 Signs You Might Be Dealing With CHS” Poster
- Marijuana and Your Body Infographic