

REDUCING HARM FROM CANNABIS

- Do not mix cannabis with other drugs such as alcohol or medication
- Try not to mix tobacco with cannabis or at least cut down how much tobacco you add, as the tobacco increases the risk of health problems
- Avoid deep inhalation when you are using cannabis, small tokes are just as effective and are better for you
- If you do smoke cannabis, joints are better for you than bong – use as few papers as possible and use a plain cardboard tip to reduce how much paper or ink you inhale with the smoke
- Don't hold the smoke in your lungs before breathing out – it does nothing to help the absorption of THC and only increases your risk of respiratory problems
- If you do smoke bong, use glass or ceramic – plastic bong are more toxic when heated

Higher Doses

Higher doses of Cannabis may produce the following effects:

- Anxiety and panic
- Restlessness and agitation
- Paranoia
- Feelings of detachment
- Decreased reaction time and impaired cognition

Harmful effects of Cannabis

- Cannabis mixed with other drugs, such as methamphetamine has an increased risk of psychosis.
- Cannabis in combination with depressants such as alcohol can increase the risk of overdose.

USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

Emergency **000**
DirectLine **1800 888 236**
Drug Info **1300 858 584**
North and West Metro Alcohol and Other Drug Service Intake **1800 700 514**
Suicide Helpline **1300 651 251**
Family Drug Help **1300 660 068**
Smoking Quitline **13 18 48**
Narcotics Anonymous **9525 2833**
North West Mental Health Triage **1300 874 243**

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CANNABIS

AND YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

S+ **sumitt**
SUBSTANCE USE & MENTAL ILLNESS TREATMENT TEAM

CANNABIS AND YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

What is Cannabis?

Cannabis is the short name for the cannabis sativa plant. The leaf, flowering buds or heads, hashish and hashish oil all come from this plant.

Other names for Cannabis

Marijuana, grass, pot, weed, hash, choof and dope.

Cannabis and your mental health

- Cannabis can significantly increase paranoid thoughts and can precipitate psychotic episodes, particularly in people with a family or background history of psychosis
- Cannabis also appears to make psychotic symptoms worse in people with schizophrenia, and can make them more difficult to treat
- Cannabis may affect your memory and you may have difficulties thinking clearly
- Cannabis use, particularly longer term, can reduce motivation and cause anxiety
- Cannabis may interfere with the effects of medication

Cannabis and other drugs

Cannabis may be hazardous to your health when used with other drugs such as alcohol, heroin, benzodiazepines and other prescribed medication.

Cannabis and driving

Cannabis impairs your ability to concentrate and to think clearly. This increases the risk of accidents when driving a car or using machines. Police drug testing now includes cannabis.

What happens when you stop using Cannabis?

If you have been using cannabis regularly you may experience withdrawal symptoms when you stop

HOW DOES CANNABIS AFFECT YOU?

- The main chemical in cannabis that makes you feel high is called delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)
- Cannabis can make you feel relaxed, happy and hungry, but can also decrease your coordination and change the way you perceive things
- Cannabis may cause poor memory and impair learning
- Cannabis is usually smoked and acts within minutes. It has a slower onset of action when ingested orally

Tolerance and Dependence

Evidence suggests that long term use of cannabis can lead to a physical dependence (this occurs in approximately 11% of users). People who are dependent on the drug may find they need more of it to achieve the desired effect. They may also experience cravings and urges to use cannabis and withdrawal symptoms when they stop.

Cannabis and pregnancy

Most drugs affect the unborn child. It is not recommended to use drugs that are not prescribed by a doctor during pregnancy. Cannabis can also be passed to the baby through breast milk.

“Changes are not easy but they’re possible and sometimes necessary” - SUMITT Consumer Consultant

Including:

- Sleep disturbance
- Irritable mood/angry outbursts
- Sweating
- Cravings (urges to use again)
- Tiredness or fatigue
- Anxiety and agitation
- Reduced appetite
- Vivid and disturbing dreams

If you normally mix tobacco with your cannabis you may also experience withdrawal from tobacco if you cut down or stop (e.g. craving for tobacco, irritability, low mood, anxiety, restlessness, difficulty concentrating and increased appetite).

Withdrawal symptoms from cannabis may last for several weeks.