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 bongs – 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 bongs, use glass or ceramic – plastic bongs 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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Information contained in this pamphlet is offered for general purposes and should not be considered as substitute advice from your mental health treating team, drug and alcohol worker or GP.
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?

- 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 symptoms 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.