



# CANNABIS





This booklet will give you advice if you are already using cannabis or are thinking about starting.

## WHAT IS CANNABIS ?

Cannabis generally refers to the dried flowers of the female plant. It comes in the form of resin, normally extracted from the flowers of the plant, the dried flowers, or very rarely as cannabis oil.

## HOW IS IT USED ?

### **Smoked as a joint**

Cannabis is usually smoked in a cigarette called a 'joint', normally rolled with tobacco.

### **Smoked using a bong or pipe**

Smoked in a pipe or a water 'bong' (a pipe which passes the smoke through water to cool and filter it).

When smoked, cannabis usually affects you quite quickly.

### **Vaporisers**

- Vaporisers (about £50 to buy) are less risky - they get just hot enough to release the THC (Tetrahydrocannabinol, the bit that gets you stoned) but not the tar.

### **Eating**

Sometime people will eat cannabis, mixed with other ingredients, eg. in biscuits (cookies) or cakes.

- If it is eaten, the effects take much longer to be felt, but can build up and get stronger over a longer time.
- It is much harder for someone to control the dose of the drug when cannabis is eaten.

# WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS ?

Cannabis affects people in different ways. It depends on how you feel, how much you smoke and where and who you are with, but generally, when smoked, the effects are felt quite quickly.

They can range from feeling relaxed, happy and laid back to feeling wired and paranoid.

Other effects can include eating large amounts of biscuits, pot burns in your favourite clothes and sitting on your arse all day.



**Cannabis Resin**



**Dried flower of the  
cannabis plant**

# PROBLEMS

## PHYSICAL HEALTH

Your lungs were not meant to take in hot, noxious gases, so smoking cannabis, even on its own, is probably not good for your lungs .

Cannabis is usually smoked with tobacco which is known to cause serious health problems including cancer and heart disease. The nicotine in tobacco is very addictive

## MENTAL HEALTH

If you feel down, cannabis will probably make you feel worse. You may feel sick, confused and worried – but these feeling will normally wear off as the cannabis does.

If you have an underlying mental health problem or one that you may not know about, using cannabis may bring it on. So, if you find yourself at the checkout at your local Asda stocking up on silver foil to stick to the inside of your house to stop people reading your mind, you might want to consider cutting down or even sacking cannabis altogether.

## DEPENDENCY

Using cannabis can become a habit. Regular users may find it hard to stop. If you smoke cannabis with tobacco you may find it even more difficult to give up cigarettes

## MOTIVATION

When you use cannabis, you may keep forgetting what you're doing and find it hard to concentrate. You might find you can't work or study properly. You may still feel spaced out the next day.

## ACCIDENTS

Cannabis can make you clumsy and slow to react. Don't smoke cannabis if you are going to drive or operate machinery.

## REDUCE THE RISKS

If you are going to start or continue to use cannabis, the advice below will help reduce the impact to your health.

### **Don't use tobacco.**

### **Don't hold smoke in your lungs**

you won't get more stoned. It just means more tar and other nasty chemicals will stick to your lungs.

### **Don't use a cigarette filter for a roach**

you will inhale more tar. Use plain card, loosely rolled up, for a roach – this lets the smoke flow easily.

### **Don't use too many papers –**

three skimmers will do – or you'll breathe in too much burnt paper.

### **Don't use plastic bottles, rubber hoses, PVC, foil and aluminium**

these give off toxic fumes when hot. Glass, steel or brass pipes are safer.

Maybe you like to get high, but not everyone does.

Show some respect. Don't smoke near people who don't take it – especially children and people with breathing problems.

## IN CONTROL

- If one of your friends is having a bad time sit them somewhere quiet and comfortable, away from others. Stay calm and keep them calm, take their mind off things by talking to them. Tell them the bad feelings will wear off soon.
- Cannabis lowers blood-sugar levels. You will feel better if you have something sweet to eat or drink.
- If you feel bad when stoned you should think about stopping, if only for a short time. Give your mind and your body a break.
- If you use it every day, have a couple of days off each week. Smoke fewer spliffs a day, or put a bit less in them.
- If you are trying to cut down, avoid places, people or events that remind you of cannabis.
- Don't buy extra, thinking you will save some for tomorrow – you probably won't.



# CANNABIS AND THE LAW

Cannabis is illegal. It is a class B drug. It's against the law to possess cannabis, sell it or give it away, grow it or let your place be used for smoking it.

The maximum penalty for possession of a Class B drug can be up to five years in prison and an unlimited fine.

The maximum penalty for supplying a Class B drug can be 14 years' imprisonment or a fine or both

## If you are over 18

An 'escalation' penalty system for possession of the drug is used to decide the punishment for anyone caught in possession.

First offence: Verbal 'cannabis warning' from the police.

Second offence: Penalty Notice for Disorder (PND), resulting in an on-the-spot £80 fine.

Third offence: Arrest, conditional caution or prosecution.

## If you are under 18

Anyone under 18 years of age found in possession of cannabis, will be taken to a police station where they may receive a reprimand, final warning or charge, depending on the seriousness of the offence. This must be administered in the presence of an appropriate adult.

If you are caught with cannabis in Scotland you'll be arrested and reported to the Procurator Fiscal, who will decide if criminal proceedings should be taken or not.

A criminal record can be a real problem at home, college or work, and in later life.