

KNOW YOUR STUFF

CANNABIS

AKA: dope, grass, hash, herb, marijuana, weed, puff, pot, skunk, gummies
(Drug names vary hugely, these are just a few examples)



WHAT IS IT?

The form of cannabis made from the leaves and flowers of the cannabis plant looks like brownish-green dried herbs and is often referred to as grass or weed. Strains that are very strong look similar but are usually greener in colour and may be covered in tiny crystals. It tends to be smoked, often mixed with tobacco. Less commonly it comes in resin form, a dark sticky oil, and a highly concentrated form that can be vaped. Cannabis is sometimes mixed into products that are eaten or drunk, most commonly sweets and cakes known as edibles.

THE HIGHS

Can cause giggling, chattiness, the munchies, a sense of relaxation and/or euphoria. Some people feel more aware of their senses and like time is slowing down.

THE LOWS

The effects of cannabis vary hugely, partly as a result of the balance between THC and CBD (which are effectively the two drugs cannabis contains) in what is being used, but also factors to do with the person who is using it, such as their personality, mood and the environment they are in. Acute effects that can occur include nausea and vomiting, coughing and difficulty breathing, feeling very sleepy or unmotivated, paranoia, confusion, aggression, anxiety and insomnia. It can also cause hallucinations, which may be distressing.

Smoking or vaping cannabis means someone feels the effects of the drug quite quickly, but using an edible means that the onset of effects is usually a lot slower. This might lead someone to think it isn't working as they expect, so they take more, putting them at increased risk of overdose or of being overwhelmed when it does kick in. Furthermore, because all forms of cannabis are illegal in the UK, there are no guarantees in terms of chemical content, meaning that products may be very weak, strong or even contain another drug altogether, most commonly Spice.

Repeated use can lead to the person struggling with learning, concentration, memory, mood and motivation, which can affect studies and work as well as friendships and relationships. It is also a risk factor for mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, and psychotic illnesses such as schizophrenia. Because cannabis is often smoked in combination with tobacco, all of the risks of tobacco are present, such as lung and heart problems, and nicotine addiction. It is also possible to become addicted to cannabis itself, and trying to reduce or stop use may cause unpleasant withdrawal symptoms such as sweating, diarrhoea, mood swings and difficulty sleeping.

Mixing drugs, including with medicines and over the counter remedies, is always a bad idea, and cannabis is no exception. Combining cannabis with alcohol or anything else that causes sleepiness can increase the risk of falls and accidents, for example, and using cannabis at the same time as some antidepressants can cause a spike in serotonin that can be fatal.

Cannabis is illegal to possess, and although the police can issue a warning that won't appear on a criminal record, this is discretionary and subject to strict eligibility criteria. Production and supply are also illegal, as is driving under the influence.



For more information go to:

FRANK

<https://www.talktofrank.com/drug/cannabis>



DSM foundation
The drug education charity

www.dsmfoundation.org.uk

The Wellbeing Hub
— from Teen Tips —



www.teentips.co.uk