

## What are the risks?

Using cannabis has a number of different risks

### Psychological:

- Feelings of depression
- Mood swings
- Lack of motivation
- Paranoia
- Increased anxiety and/or panic attacks
- Short/long term memory loss
- Psychosis
- Psychological dependency
- Confusion
- Disruption of sleep pattern
- Relapse of any pre-existing mental health conditions

### Physical:

- Smoking related illnesses i.e. lung cancer and cardiovascular problems
- Aggravate asthma
- Increased heart rate
- Weakened immune system
- Circulation problems
- Impotence
- Other breathing/lung complications
- High blood pressure
- Harm foetus in pregnant women

## Did you know?

Like drinking and driving, driving when high is illegal – and you can still be unfit to drive the day after smoking cannabis. You can get a heavy fine, be disqualified from driving or even go to prison.

## Cannabis and the law

Cannabis is a class B drug – it's illegal to have for yourself, give away or sell.

Possession is illegal whatever you're using it for, including pain relief. The penalty is up to five years in jail.

Supplying someone else can get you fourteen years and an unlimited fine.

Supplying your mates, even if you give it away, is also considered 'supplying' under the law.

A conviction for a drug-related offence could have a pretty serious impact. It can stop you visiting certain countries – for example the United States – and limit the types of jobs you can apply for.

## Find out more

If you would like more information or support on cannabis or you are affected by someone else's use please contact us at Inclusion Recovery Hampshire.

Information is also available at:

NHS Website: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

Talk to Frank Website: [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

### HOW TO CONTACT US

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Or visit: [www.staffstars.org](http://www.staffstars.org)

You. Me. Us

This leaflet was created by:   Part of Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust Find out more at [www.inclusion.org](http://www.inclusion.org)

## Cannabis What you need to know!



 STaRS

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## What is cannabis?

It's the most widely-used illegal drug in Britain.

- Cannabis is naturally occurring - it is made from the cannabis plant.
- The main active chemical in it is tetrahydrocannabinol (or THC for short).

## The myths

- It is safe because it's natural
- Using cannabis will completely ruin your life, your health and your future
- Using cannabis will lead you into using other, more dangerous drugs

What is true is that cannabis can have some very real, harmful effects on your mind and body, as well as creating longer-term problems.

## How is cannabis taken?

There are a few ways of taking cannabis:

Most people mix it with tobacco, roll it up into something known as a 'spliff' or a 'joint', and then smoke it.

Some people smoke it using a type of pipe called a bong.

Some people smoke it using e-cigarettes - by using specialised cannabis 'vapers' or by turning their cannabis into a liquid which can be used with a normal e-cigarette. There is also no evidence on the safety of home-made cannabis e-liquids.

Others drink or eat it mixed in cookies, cakes or even cups of tea. The effects of cannabis can be more difficult to predict or to control when taking it this way. It takes cannabis longer to get in to your body by this route (waiting for the effects to reach their peak and then wear off can be unpleasant).

## What does it look like?

Although it's all from the same plant, cannabis comes in many different forms. An overview of the different forms are as follows;

### Hash

Hash is a black or brown soft lump made from the resin of the cannabis plant.

### Grass/weed

Grass, also known as weed, is made from the dried leaves and flowering parts of the female cannabis plant and looks like tightly packed dried herbs. This traditional grass was normally imported and much weaker than the 'skunk' types of cannabis usually sold now.

### Skunk

Skunk is a group of different types of strong herbal cannabis. Sinsemilla, home-grown cannabis, nether-weed are all different types of cannabis that are part of this 'skunk' group. The strength of skunk is usually higher than hash/grass/weed.

### Cannabis oil

Cannabis oil is a sticky, dark honey-coloured substance.



## What are the effects?

Cannabis is classed as a sedating and hallucinogenic drug. Its effects can turn out to be pleasant or unpleasant:

- Make you feel chilled out, happy and relaxed
- Make you hallucinate, (alter your senses, so that you might see, hear or feel things in a different way to normal)
- Make you feel anxious and/or paranoid,
- Make it difficult for you to concentrate and learn
- Make your memory worse and feel less motivated
- Make you crave food experiencing 'the munchies' (because it lowers your blood sugar)
- Effects your coordination (and therefore impairs your ability to drive or operate machinery safely)
- Make you feel nauseous or vomit ("throw a whitey")
- When using with alcohol it can have particularly serious consequences - the accident rate is 16 times higher than for cannabis or alcohol alone

