



For further information:

Drugaid

Tel: 0870 060 0310

0870 numbers are more expensive from a mobile. 0870 numbers are cheaper from a landline.

Tel: 02920 868 675

Tel: 01685 721 991

www.drugaidcymru.com



Cannabis

Cannabis

Dope, weed, grass, hash, skunk, ganja

What does it look like?



What is it?

Cannabis comes from the plant of the same name. Its active ingredient is a mild hallucinogenic agent called Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).

Cannabis comes in three main forms: cannabis resin (hashish), herbal cannabis (marijuana) and cannabis oil. Cannabis resin is a brown tar like substance scraped from the flowering buds of the plant. Marijuana is composed of dried leaves. Oil is the concentrated extract of THC.

More recently the illicit market has partially moved from cannabis production abroad to people in the UK growing the plant indoors under artificial lighting and with controlled nutrition. This has contributed to an increase in the production of "skunk", a strong strain with a higher than average THC content. There has been much concern particularly in the medical profession that there is a strong link between skunk and mental illness.

Cannabis is usually mixed with tobacco and rolled into joints, although 'pipes', 'bongs' and 'buckets' are also used to smoke cannabis. It can also be brewed in a drink or cooked with food and eaten.

Cannabis is the most commonly used illegal drug worldwide.

Drugaid

What will it do to me?

Cannabis takes effect quickly and can produce feelings of relaxation.

The effects of the drug will depend on its strength (the levels of THC) and the person's tolerance.

People report heightened perception, hilarity and talkativeness. You may find it difficult to concentrate and can feel lethargic.

Cannabis can cause paranoia, anxiety and agitation.

If use is heavy it can be detected in the body by a urine test for up to 28 days.

When does it become a problem?

- Cannabis is generally considered to be not physically addictive, although long-term users have reported withdrawal effects.
- People can develop a psychological dependency with regular, long-term use.
- Long-term use of cannabis can cause respiratory problems and an increased risk of lung cancer.
- Long-term use of cannabis can cause severe paranoia, anxiety, depression and mood swings.
- You can feel lethargic, have a lack of energy and are unable to concentrate even after you stop.

- You can spend your time watching daytime TV and doing very little else! This can lead to feelings of low self-worth.

Staying safer

- The less cannabis you smoke the less likely you are to have unpleasant side effects.
- As with any illegal drug its purity and strength is unknown.
- Avoid mixing cannabis with other drugs, including alcohol.
- The safest method of using cannabis is a vaporizer which heats the cannabis rather than burning it. It reduces the exposure of the throat and lungs to products of burning.
- Most effects of cannabis are reversed when use is stopped.

The Law

In January 2009 Cannabis was reclassified from a Class C drug to a Class B drug.

Penalties

Possession: 5 years imprisonment and/or a fine.

Supply: Up to 14 years imprisonment and/or a fine.