



cannabis: what is it?

Cannabis is derived from the cannabis plant (*cannabis sativa*). It grows wild in many of the tropical and temperate areas of the world. It can be grown in almost any climate, and is increasingly cultivated by means of indoor hydroponic technology.

The main active ingredient in cannabis is called delta-9 tetrahydro-cannabinol, commonly known as THC. This is the part of the plant that gives the 'high'. There is a wide range of THC potency between cannabis products.

Cannabis is used in three main forms: marijuana, hashish and hash oil. Marijuana is made from the dried flowers and leaves of the cannabis plant. It is usually the least potent of all the cannabis products and is almost always smoked. Hashish is made from the resin (a secreted gum) of the cannabis plant. It is dried and pressed into small blocks and smoked. It can also be added to food and eaten. Hash oil, the most potent cannabis product, is a thick oil obtained from hashish. It is also smoked.

Cannabis is usually smoked in hand-rolled cigarettes (known as 'joints') or in special waterpipes ('bongs').

how many people use cannabis?

Cannabis is the most widely used illicit drug in Australia. According to the 2007 National Drug Household Survey, 33.5% of the Australian population reported using cannabis at some time, with 9.1% having used it in the last 12 months.

- 20% of 14-19 year olds reported ever using cannabis
- 49.5% of 20-29 year olds reported ever using the drug
- 54.6% of 30-39 year olds reported ever using the drug

other names for cannabis

Cannabis is also known as marijuana, grass, pot, dope, Mary Jane, hooch, weed, hash, joints, brew, reefers, cones, smoke, mull, buddha, ganga, hydro, yarndi, heads and green.

what are the short-term effects of cannabis?

The short-term effects of using cannabis may include:

- feeling of well-being
- talkativeness
- drowsiness
- loss of inhibitions
- decreased nausea
- increased appetite
- loss of co-ordination
- bloodshot eyes
- dryness of the eyes, mouth and throat
- anxiety and paranoia



what are the long-term effects of cannabis?

There is limited research on the long-term effects of cannabis. On the available evidence, the major probable adverse effects are:

- increased risk of respiratory diseases associated with smoking, including cancer
- decreased memory and learning abilities
- decreased motivation in areas such as study, work or concentration

There is also much concern about the link between cannabis use and mental health problems and the risk of dependence.