

Also called marijuana, pot, weed, grass, gunja, yarrdi, Mary Jane.

Cannabis is a depressant drug which means that it slows down and interferes with the functioning of the brain and body. Cannabis contains the psychoactive chemical THC (delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol) which can cause hallucinogenic effects. Hallucinogens affect the brain, producing distortions of the senses, mood and thought.

### What does it look like?

- Dried plant matter
- Dried resin (hashish)
- Hash oil

In recent years there have been products manufactured and referred to as "synthetic cannabis". These products aim to mimic the effects of THC but these can be unpredictable.

### How is it used?

- Smoked through pipes, bongs, joints
- Inhaled via a vapouriser
- Cooked into food and eaten

### What are the possible short-term effects?

People commonly use cannabis to induce a feeling of euphoria, to feel relaxed, or to assist with sleep and appetite.

Cannabis affects people differently depending on a range of factors including how strong it is, how it is consumed, how much is consumed, whether it is used with other drugs (including tobacco), and the individual characteristics of the person. It is important to know that there is no safe level of use.

*Cannabis use can increase the risk of developing mental health problems including paranoia, depression, anxiety, hallucinations or psychosis, particularly if there is a past or family history of mental health concerns.*

### What are the possible long-term effects?

- Decreased motivation
- Memory and learning problems
- Reduced sex drive
- Increased risk of cancer
- Mood swings
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Confusion
- Paranoia
- Hallucinations

### What are the signs of a cannabis problem?

- Spending a great deal of time getting, using, or recovering from the effects
- Using in greater amounts, or for longer than originally planned
- Needing to use more to get the same effect
- Having cravings, difficulties stopping/reducing use
- Experiencing withdrawal symptoms
- Social problems including relationship issues, financial problems, impacts on study or work and legal problems

### Thinking about cutting back or stopping?

Withdrawal symptoms may be unpleasant, but will lessen over time. Common withdrawal symptoms include low mood, anxiety, poor sleep, irritability, agitation, depression, intense hunger, tiredness and cravings.

Sometimes it can take a few attempts to cut back or stop.

- Focus on reasons for cutting down or stopping
- Avoid mixing cannabis with tobacco (spin)
- Set limits on when and how much is used
- Avoid 'triggers' (i.e. things associated with using such as places, people and stressful situations)
- Ask a friend, family member or health professional for support

### Cannabis use and pregnancy

Using cannabis while pregnant is linked to higher rates of miscarriage, premature birth, stillbirth and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). People who are concerned about their cannabis use while pregnant or breastfeeding should talk to their doctor or health professional.

### What help is available?

Adis 24/7 Alcohol and Drug Support is a 24 hour, 7 day a week confidential support service for people in Queensland with alcohol and other drug concerns, their loved ones and health professionals.

**Talk to us. Anytime, anywhere.**  
**1800 177 833**

### What should I do in an emergency?

If someone is experiencing strong hallucinations, anxiety or paranoia, try and keep them calm and safe.

If the person has collapsed or lost consciousness, call an ambulance on **triple zero (000)**. If they have stopped breathing commence CPR. If they are breathing normally, place them into the recovery position and continue to monitor them.

