

# CANNABIS

## WHAT IS IT?

Cannabis is a type of plant that has long been used for hemp fiber and oils as well as its medicinal and recreational drug properties. The main active ingredient is THC, which is responsible for the mind-altering effects. Many forms of cannabis currently exist, and each carry a different potency of THC. CBD (cannabidiol) is another substance found in cannabis with little, if any, intoxicating properties. CBD is often associated with medical uses, such as relieving insomnia, anxiety, spasticity, epilepsy, and pain. However, cannabis is currently a Schedule I drug, which means it is considered to have a high potential for abuse and no medical benefit. Many activists groups are working to change this classification.

## SHORT TERM EFFECTS

Potentially include:

- Relaxation/euphoria
- Altered sensory perception
- Increased heart rate and appetite
- Dilated pupils
- Memory impairment
- Red eyes and swollen eyelids
- Loss of coordination, slower reaction time
- Impaired judgment
- Loss of inhibitions
- Difficulty thinking and problem solving
- Dryness of the eyes, mouth and throat
- Cough
- Increased appetite/decreased nausea
- Anxiety and paranoia

## LONG TERM EFFECTS

Potentially include:

- Increased risk of respiratory infections/diseases associated with smoking, including cancer
- Decreased memory and learning abilities
- Decreased motivation in areas such as study, work or concentration
- Anxiety and panic attacks
- Fertility issues
- Impaired immune system

## DEPENDENCE

While there is often conflicting evidence regarding cannabis's addictive nature, cannabis use definitely has the potential to become a compulsive habit that may interfere with family, school, work, and recreational activities. Signs of physical/psychological dependence include:

- A growing interest to smoke more often
- The use of cannabis, or thoughts of using, replaces other things that used to interest the person, including but not limited to hobbies, sports, working out, class work, clubs or organizations, friends
- Less interest in doing activities sober, or not high
- Increase in tolerance, needing more cannabis than before to feel the effects. Putting self in danger (legal or physical) or dangerous situations to smoke

Dependence may lead to withdrawal symptoms after quitting or cutting back on cannabis, including irritability, restlessness or trouble sleeping, fatigue, depressed mood, anger/aggression, strange dreams, appetite change, nausea or stomach pain, weight loss, shakiness, or sweating.



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