



## CANNABIS

Cannabis is the most widely used illegal drug in Britain. It is a naturally grown plant, and the leaves are commonly dried and smoked.

Cannabis is a mild sedative and hallucinogen so you can feel sleepy, or chilled out and also experience 'seeing things' or having hallucinations. The main active drug in cannabis is tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).

**Slang:** Street names for drugs can vary by region. **blow, blunts, bush, dope, draw, ganja, grass, hash, hashish, hemp, herb, marijuana, pot, puff, resin, skunk, smoke, spliff, wacky backy, weed, zero.**

### The effects

- You can feel chilled out, relaxed and happy, but some also experience nausea and dizziness.
- The 'munchies' are a common side effect when you start to feel hungry.
- You can get psychologically dependant on cannabis whereby you want to continue using it whilst knowing it will be doing you some harm – there are no physical withdrawal symptoms.
- You're also at risk of getting addicted to nicotine if you roll your 'spliffs' with tobacco.

### The law

Cannabis is illegal; it is now a Class B drug after being reclassified in 2009. If you're caught with cannabis the police will always take action.

### Appearance and use

Cannabis comes in different forms.

- Hash: This is a blacky-brown lump made from the resin of the plant and is the commonest form of cannabis in the UK. It's quite often squidgy.
- Grass or weed (traditional herbal cannabis): the dried leaves of the plant.
- Skunk: Looks like grass type cannabis but is stronger than ordinary 'weed' as it has higher levels of THC.
- Most people mix cannabis with tobacco and smoke it as a spliff or a joint. Some people put it in a pipe whilst others put it into 'space cake' or other food.

### Cost

Grass is usually more expensive than resin (hash), and stronger forms of the drug e.g. skunk are more expensive. You can usually get 1/8 ounce for £20 (a '£20 bag').

### The risks

- You can become anxious, panicky, and paranoid and your concentration and general motivation can be affected. Even hardcore smokers can experience these effects.
- It affects your motor skills, things like hand-eye coordination – that's why it's illegal to drug-drive just as it is illegal to drink-drive.
- Cannabis can be mixed with other chemicals so it can affect your lungs and has been linked to cancer.
- There's also increasing evidence of a link between cannabis and mental health problems such as schizophrenia, especially if you have a history of mental health or are experiencing paranoia.