

## What it looks like

Cannabis comes in three different forms.

- Leaves, stalks or seeds. This is known as grass.
- A dark-brown lump of resin. This is known as hash.
- A sticky dark-coloured oil. This is usually kept in a jar.

## How it's taken

Cannabis is usually mixed with tobacco and smoked like a cigarette. This is known as a spliff, joint, toke or reefer. Cannabis can also be smoked in a pipe.

Users sometimes mix it with food, such as cake or hot drinks. If it's taken in food, the effects can be stronger and harder to control.

## What it costs

Enough grass cannabis to make five joints costs about £5. But in general there is a wide variation in costs, depending on where you live, where you buy it and what type of cannabis it is.

## What it does

Cannabis has a significant effect on mood and behaviour. That's because it affects parts of the brain that are linked to pain sensations, emotion and movement.

Most users become relaxed and feel light-headed.

It can also make some people giggle, and makes colours and sounds seem stronger for some people.

For some, it can cause cravings for certain types of food.

There are other people who use cannabis to relieve the muscle pain associated with multiple sclerosis.

## How long the effects last

The effects of cannabis generally last for up to four hours, but you can never be certain.

Cannabis can be different each time you take it, depending on how much you use, how it is taken, the strength, and your mood.

## Addiction

About one in 10 users get addicted. If you mix cannabis with tobacco you can get hooked on nicotine.



## Risks

### Dangers

Cannabis contains more tar than tobacco, so you have a high risk of contracting bronchitis and lung cancer if you smoke it.

Cannabis can also dramatically increase the risk of being in a car crash.

Recent research carried out by the University of Auckland in New Zealand found that heavy users, under the influence of cannabis, are 10 times more likely to have a car accident.

It's illegal to use drugs and drive. You could go to prison, get a heavy fine or be disqualified from driving.

### Physical effects

Cannabis affects co-ordination, balance and memory.

An inexperienced user may feel sick or actually be sick if they try too much at once.

Using cannabis while you are pregnant may harm your baby.

Using cannabis with other drugs, such as alcohol, can have a greater effect than the two used independently.

### Mental effects

Sometimes it can make people withdrawn, fearful, anxious or depressed.

Mild panic and paranoia are other side effects.

Cannabis can also have a negative effect on people with mental health problems, or on those who have a history of mental illness in the family. In particular, it can increase the risk of schizophrenia.

**What the law says** Cannabis is illegal.

It is illegal to own it, supply it or grow it.

All forms of cannabis are classified as Class B drugs.

Possession of cannabis can mean up to five years in prison, or an unlimited fine, or both.

Dealing or growing cannabis can get you up to 14 years in prison, or an unlimited fine, or both.

**Fact: by law, passing drugs among friends is classed as supplying.**

**Fact: some countries may refuse visas to people who have drug convictions.**

**Getting more information**

Phone the free and confidential 'Know the Score' information line on **0800 587 587 9**, to speak to a trained advisor. Someone is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Calls from landlines are free and will not show up on the phone bill. Or, you can visit the 'Know the Score' website at **[www.knowthescore.info](http://www.knowthescore.info)**.

Both the information line and the website can provide information about local services. Also, you can ask your GP to refer you to a specialist drugs service.

GLUE HERE

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