



Cannabis

Bongo/Ganja/Grass/Marijuana/Pot/Thai sticks

What is it?

Cannabis is a tobacco-like greenish or brownish material made up of the dried flowering tops and leaves of the cannabis (hemp) plant. Cannabis resin or "hash" is the dried black or brown secretion of the flowering tops of the cannabis plant, which is made into a powder or pressed into slabs or cakes. Cannabis oil or "hash oil" is cannabis resin in liquid form.

Cannabis is by far the most cultivated, trafficked and abused illicit drug. About 147 million, or 2.5 per cent of the world's population, consume cannabis annually.

How is it taken?

All forms of cannabis are usually smoked. Cannabis resin and oil can also be ingested orally or brewed in tea.

How does it affect users?

Cannabis can make users feel relaxed and heighten their sensory awareness. Thus, users may experience a more vivid sense of sight, smell, taste and hearing.

What are the risks associated with cannabis use?

Short-term effects include increased appetite and pulse rate. While high, users' intellectual and physical abilities are impaired.

With large doses, users may experience severely altered sensory perceptions and slow and confused thinking. If the dose is very large, the effects of cannabis are similar to those of hallucinogens, and may cause anxiety, panic and even psychotic episodes.

Regular users of cannabis risk developing dependency to the point where they lose interest in all other activities, such as work and personal relationships.

Furthermore, cannabis smoke also contains 50 per cent more tar than high tar cigarettes, thus putting users at an increased risk for lung cancer and other respiratory diseases.

Other risks

As with any illicit drug, taking cannabis also clouds the user's judgment and increases the chance of him or her making bad choices, such as having unprotected sex. Thus, the user risks contracting HIV/AIDS, hepatitis and other infectious diseases.

