



CANNABIS

What is it?

The drug Cannabis comes from *cannabis sativa*, a bushy plant grown in many parts of the world. It can take three forms; Cannabis Herb consists of the leaves and flowers of the cannabis plant. It is also known as Marijuana, Grass, Dope, Pot and Weed.

Cannabis Resin also known as Hash, Hashish, Leb Gold, Paki Black and Blow, can be yellowy green-brown or black in color. It is squeezed or scraped from the plant and compressed into blocks. Cannabis Oil, or Hash Oil, Liquid Hash is the strongest type of cannabis drug and is obtained by extracting liquid from the plant and then distilling the extract to concentrate the chemical strength.

What is Cannabis? What are its effects?

Cannabis contains over 400 different chemicals, the most important chemical in cannabis is THC, (short for Tetrahydrocannabinol). The amounts of THC in cannabis vary with the type of drug, how it is used and where it comes from.

The most common effects of cannabis are relaxation, talkativeness, giddiness, euphoria and an altered perception of music and color. There can be different levels and experiences of 'getting high', depending on the amount and type of chemicals in the drug used, and some novice users may feel sick.

In larger amounts (or with stronger than usual forms of the drug) users may feel depressed, suffer panic and anxiety attacks, hallucinate and suffer from paranoia.

How is it used?

Cannabis is usually smoked in joints (home rolled cigarettes) or pipes, but can also be eaten in cakes and biscuits.

Did you know that?

THC and other chemicals in cannabis remain in the brain and reproductive organs for two to three weeks after a single joint, and can be detected in urine for up to 30 days.

Cannabis slows down the brain's ability to think and remember things. Its use impairs the ability to ride a bicycle, drive a car and operate machinery, which may increase the risk of accident.

Long term cannabis use can trigger mental illness such as schizophrenia and depression, or make attacks of mental illness worse. Prolonged cannabis use can cause psychological dependence for some people and therefore make it difficult to control the use of the drug or to give it up. This could lead to dropping out of study and work, difficulty in concentrating and failing exams. There is nothing in cannabis itself which causes people to try other illegal drugs, yet people who smoke cannabis are more likely to experiment with other illegal drugs.

The smoke from cannabis has more cancer-causing chemicals than the highest tar tobacco, which increases the risk of lung and throat cancer. The chemicals from cannabis can damage the development of the foetus in the womb.

The legal risk.

Possession of the drug for personal use could result in a fine of up to £500 for a first offence, up to £1000 for a second offence, and three years imprisonment or fine (unlimited) or both, for a third and subsequent offence. Supplying the drug could result in a jail sentence of up to life imprisonment, or an open-ended fine.

Conviction for use or possession may damage career or travel (visa) prospects.

Where to get help or information.

Drug Treatment Centre Board
30-31 Pearse St., Dublin 2.
Ph: 01 677 1122

Arbour House
St. Finbars Hospital, Douglas Rd., Cork.
Ph: 021 968 933

The Talbot Centre
29 Upper Buckingham St., Dublin 1.
Ph: 01 836 3434

Mater Dei Counselling Centre
Clonliffe College, Dublin 3.
Ph: 01 837 1892

Drug Awareness Programme Cross Care
Clonliffe College, Dublin 3.
Ph: 01 836 0911

Ballymun Youth Action Project
1a Balcurris Rd., Ballymun, Dublin 11.
Ph: 01 842 8071

Merchants Quay Project
4 Merchant Quay, Dublin 8.
Ph: 01 679 0044

Coolmine Family & Friends Association
Coolmine, Clonsilla, Dublin 15.
Ph: 01 475 5111

The Garda National Drug Unit,
Dublin Castle
Dublin 2
Ph: 01 4755111

Community Awareness of Drugs
31a Central Hotel Chambers, Dame Court, Dublin 2.
Ph: 01 679 2681

Health Boards: Health Promotional Offices:

North Eastern Health Board
Railway Road, Navan, Co. Meath.
Ph: 046 71872, Fax: 046 28818

North Western Health Board
Saimer Court, Main Street, Ballyshannon,
Co. Donegal.
Ph: 072 52000, Fax: 072 51287

Southern Health Board
Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital, Western Road, Cork.
Ph: 021 923480, Fax: 021 923494

Western Health Board

Shantalla Clinic, 25 Newcastle Road , Galway.

Ph: 091 523122 Ext. 6405, Fax: 091 501413

Mid-Western Health Board

Parkview House, Pery Street, Limerick.

Ph: 061 483218, Fax: 061 483356

Midland Health Board

The Mall, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.

Ph: 0506 46733, Fax: 0506 46747

Eastern Health Board

15 City Gate, St Augustine's St., Dublin 8.

Ph: 01 670 7987, Fax: 01 670 7978

South Eastern Health Board

Dean Street

Kilkenny

Ph: 056 61400

Fax: 056 64112

South Eastern Health Board,
Dean Street, Kilkenny
Ph: 056 61400, Fax: 056 64112

Health Promotion Unit.
Produced with the assistance of Dr. Des Corrigan.