Cannabis Awareness

Information about cannabis for consumers and carers

Queensland Government

This booklet has been developed by the Statewide Deafness and Mental Health Service and other stakeholders to be used as a resource in educating Deaf people about Cannabis.

Illustrations and images were sourced from:

- Glickman, N. & Gulati, S. (Eds.). (2003). *Mental Health Care of Deaf People: A culturally affirmative approach.* New Jersey. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Glickman, N. (2009). *Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy for Deaf and Hearing Persons with language and learning challenges.* New York.
- Microsoft Office Clip Art, 2020

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Queensland Government

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What is Cannabis?

Cannabis is a **drug**.

Cannabis comes from two types of plants known as 'Cannabis Sativa' or 'Cannabis Indica'.

Cannabis has other names too…

Dope	Yarndi	Choof
Pot	Gunja	Grass
Weed	Joint	Hash (oil/liquid)
Cone	Stick	Marijuana
Mary Jane	Mull	Hashish (resin/wax)

Ways cannabis is used

Cannabis plant leaves and flowers are dried, but sometimes cannabis **hashish** (resin) or **hash** (oil) is used.

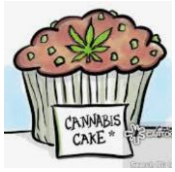
Cannabis can be smoked, inhaled (breathing in), or eaten (cooked in food).

Joint

Bong

Vaporiser

Pipe

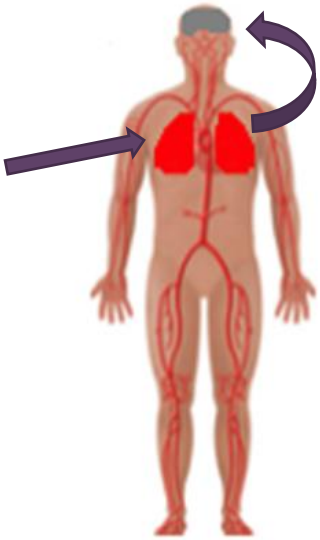


Cakes/brownies and cookies

Cannabis and the body

When smoked, a chemical called **THC** (pg. 25), the main part of cannabis that makes a person feel 'high', travels through the blood stream.

THC goes into the lungs and to the brain very quickly



The 'high' feeling can change how a person sees, hears and feels.

NB.

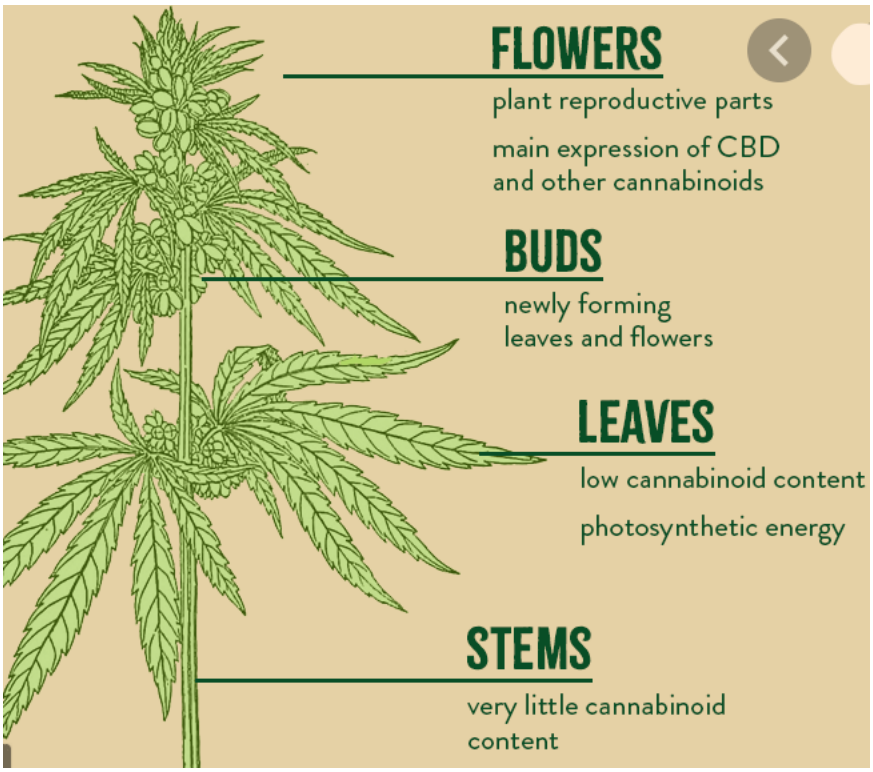
CBD (Cannabidiol) is from the cannabis plant too, but has no 'high' and is often used as a medicine for health problems e.g. seizures, cancer, etc.

There are different levels of **CBD** and **THC** in cannabis plants. But people who grow the plants usually want the 'high' **THC**.

The effects of cannabis

Depends on…

- How often it is used e.g. once only or daily
- How strong it is.
  - This depends on which part of the plant and strain of plant is used. Plants are carefully selected to crossbreed to increase the level of 'high' (**THC**).



Different parts of the plant are picked

- It depends on the tool and the amount of cannabis used.

Rolled joint

Pipe

Vaporiser

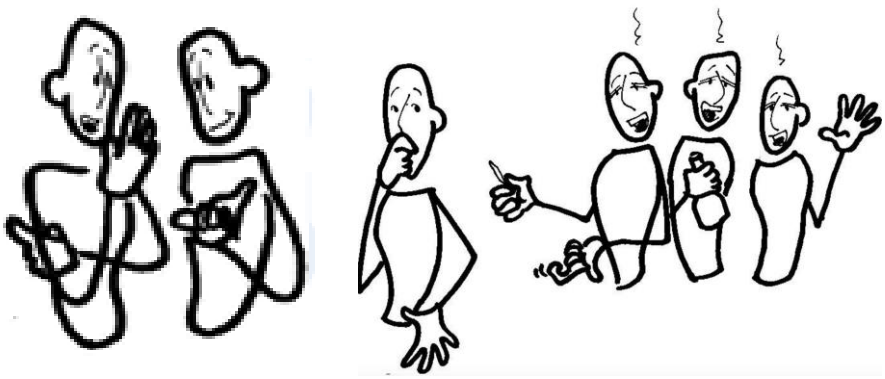
Bong

- It depends on the person's mood at the time of taking cannabis.

Happy

Sad

- Friends can influence how much cannabis is used.



- If the cannabis is mixed with other drugs or alcohol.

- Age

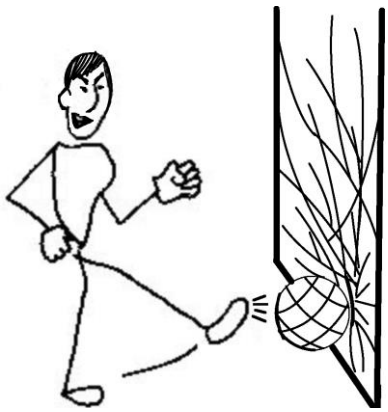
Young people can have developmental and social problems when using cannabis early in life. It can sometimes effect…

Memory

Learning

School work

Mental health

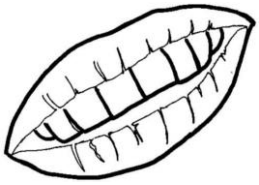


Behaviour problems

The body's reaction to cannabis

Here are some short and long-term effects of being 'high' that can sometimes lead to negative responses.

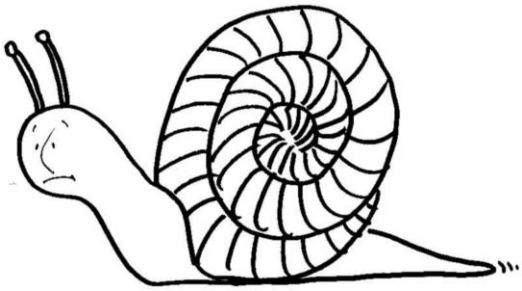
Laughing lots



A dry mouth and throat

Feeling relaxed and/or tired

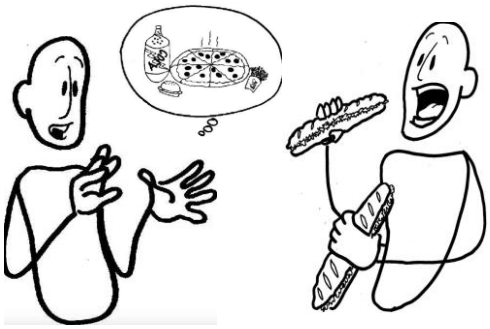
Feeling unwell



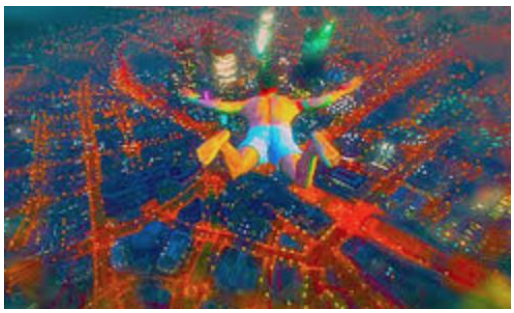
Slower movements

Bloodshot (red) eyes

Talking lots



Hungry/eating lots



Hallucinating (seeing things and hearing sounds)

Poor coordination when driving or walking

Feeling depressed

A racing heart and breathing problems

Poor concentration and memory

Risk of psychosis

Panic and anxiety

Mixing cannabis with tobacco

When smoking cannabis with tobacco there is a higher chance of lung cancer and other health risks like…

Nicotine dependence

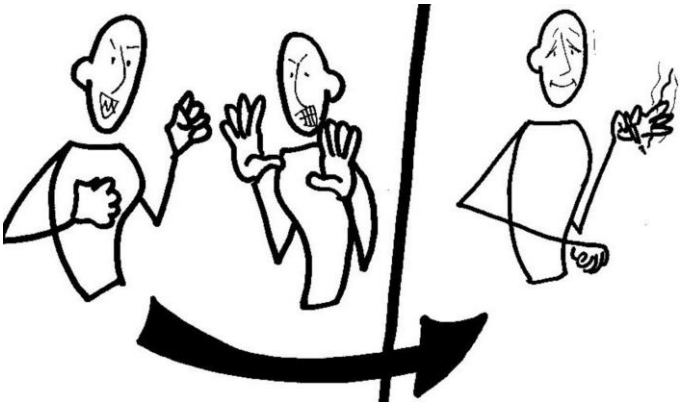
A sore throat

Asthma/wheezing

Bronchitis

Mental health risks

For some people, cannabis use from an early age or long-term cannabis use can make mental health problems worse.



Mood changes

Poor thinking: finding it hard to learn and remember.

Sometimes cannabis can lead to schizophrenia or other psychotic disorders.

Social impacts of cannabis

Poor schoolwork

Money problems

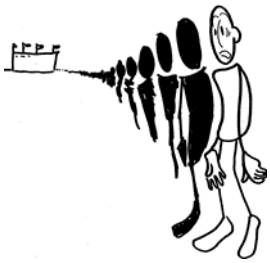
Relationship issues

Withdrawal/isolation from family and friends

When in trouble with the law, it can make it harder with…

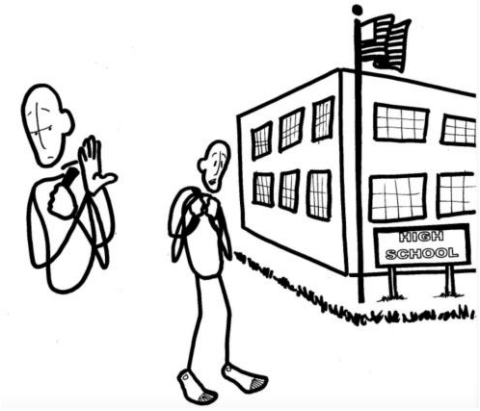
Relationships

Accommodation

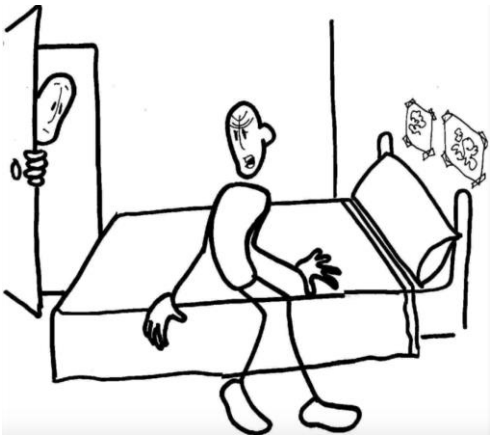


Employment

Travel



Being late or not going to school, work or having accidents can lead to a job loss.

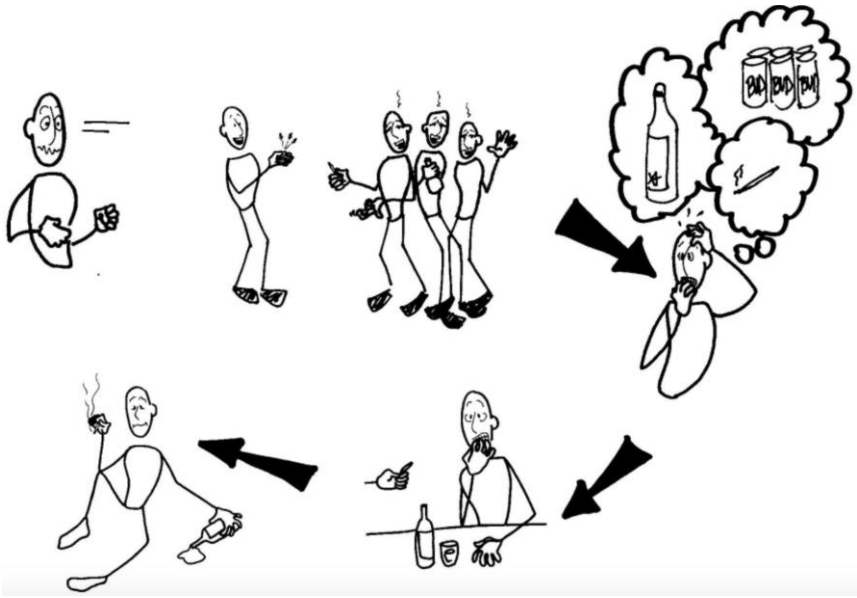


Problems with family

If mothers use cannabis during pregnancy or while breastfeeding, babies can have memory or concentration problems.

When cannabis is a problem

Using cannabis often, can lead to a **cannabis use disorder** which means a person becomes dependent on the drug and it becomes harder to stop.



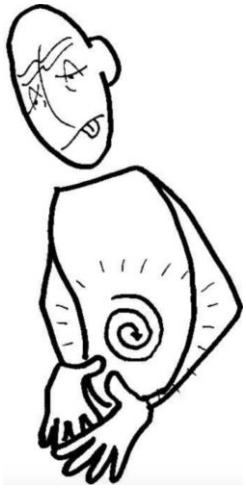
Signs of problems to look for…

- Taking a long time getting, using or recovering from the side effects.
- Wanting to use cannabis more and more.
- Experiencing withdrawal symptoms.

Cannabis withdrawal

When stopping after long term cannabis use, these feelings might happen for a week or so…

Sweats



Feeling sick

Tremors/shakes

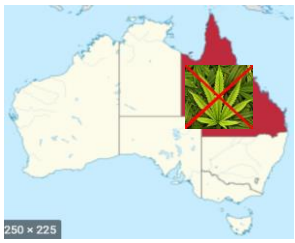
It may take time to get a better night's sleep.

Cravings (wanting to take cannabis again)

Cannabis is illegal

In Queensland, people **cannot**…

- Grow/cultivate cannabis.



- Use, sell or share cannabis with other people.

- Have cannabis in the car, house or on your person.

- Have used utensils (tools) or plan to use these utensils for illegal drugs.

Bongs

Scales

- Driving after cannabis use.
  The court could fine you, cancel the driving licence and send you to jail.

- If caught with any amount of cannabis, it could be time in jail.

- It is against the law to supply (give/sell) cannabis to any person.

Did you know?

Drug tests can show cannabis in…

- Blood up to 36 hours.
- Urine/Pee up to 90 days for heavy users.
- Saliva, approx. 4 – 12 hours, depending on use.

Minimising harm. In the community, there are services and policies to reduce and prevent harm. These services help people to make decisions and choices and keep people safe. They are…

- Educational programs
- Warnings on tobacco packets
- Counselling services

Harm Minimisation

- When trying cannabis for the first time try a small dose.

- Smoke in a safe place with friends you trust.

- Look after mates.

- Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated.

- Try not to mix cannabis with other drugs. It can be dangerous.

- Don't drive after using cannabis. It is illegal.

- Try not to hold smoke in your lungs more than 2-5 seconds. Holding your breath will not make the 'high' stronger.

- Using a vaporiser is better than a joint or bong. There is less chance of health problems.

- Don't mix with tobacco. This can increase the risk of cancer or dependence.

- Beware of man-made cannabis. It can look like cannabis, but it is **not** and can be very dangerous.

Carer information

Worried that someone you care about is using Cannabis?

- Think about what to say to the person.
- Think how to approach the person.
- Choose a quiet place and time so there are no interruptions.
- Listen to the person and understand their reason for using cannabis. Don't blame!
- Don't name call. Addict, stoner or pothead won't help to support the person.
- Use "I" statements not "you" and explain your concerns on how the drug use impacts on you.
- Ask the person if they would like support from a professional.

Where to get help

Talk through the National Relay Service (NRS) or the Video Relay Service (VRS).

Service	Contact
NABS (National Auslan Interpreter Booking and Payment Service)	1800 448 448
ADIS (Alcohol and Drug Information Service)	1800 177 833
1300 MH Call	1300 64 22 55
Headspace	1800 650 890
National Alcohol and Other Drug Hotline	1800 250 015
Kids Helpline	1800 551 800
Inclusion of Family Drug Support (FDS)	1300 368 186
Centrelink crisis payment for financial help	13 2850
Lifeline	13 11 14
Deaf Services	3892 8500 or TTY 3892 8501
Legal Aid	1300 65 11 88 or TTY service (07) 3238 3023
Community Legal Centres Qld	http://communitylegalqld.org.au/
Your local doctor	

Emergency numbers

Contact emergency services if someone needs urgent medical attention.

Emergency Contacts	Contact number
Voice – Phone, Captioned Relay or Internet Relay	000
SMS Relay	0423 677 767
Speak and listen	1300 555 727
by TTY, Police (type PPP), ambulance (type AAA)	106
Speak and read – say ambulance or police	1800 555 727 and ask for triple zero (000)
Video Relay Service (VRS)	login to skype and contact an NRS contact name
Policelink (non – urgent)	SMS 0437 131 444

Note: *You will need to give your address or location*

Glossary

- **Bronchitis –** a sickness that causes coughing, wheezing, aches and pain as well as feeling short of breath.
- **Cannabidiol –** a chemical found in the Cannabis Sativa plant.
- **Coordination –** Using different parts of the body to move and work together smoothly.
- **Crossbreed** – mixing a part or a variety of plant/s with another.
- **Functioning –** how the body and brain work together.
- **Minimisation** – to decrease or reduce something.
- **Nicotine –** is an addictive stimulant found in tobacco and can be highly toxic in concentrated forms i.e. e-cig juice.
- **Psychosis –** is an illness that affects the mind. It might cause a person to see, hear, feel and believe things that are not real.
- **Resin** – a soft or hard substance taken from a plant.
- **Saliva –** watery liquid in the mouth. Helps with swallowing.
- **Stimulant –** a drug that raises excitement in the body and mind e.g. more alertness, increased speech, less sleep.
- **THC -** Delta-9 Tetrahydrocannabinol is a chemical found in a cannabis plant that causes a 'high' excited happy wellness feeling.
- **Toxic –** a harmful substance that is bad for the body and can cause illness.

Resources and Websites

1. https://adis.health.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/resource/file/QMHA10112_Cannabis_Fact_Sheet_v2.1_logo.pdf

2. https://cannabissupport.com.au/what-is-cannabis/

3. **Alcohol and Drug Foundation** https://adf.org.au/drug-facts/cannabis/

4. https://adis.health.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/resource/file/Family_Cannabis_Fact_Sheet_v1.0.pdf

5. **Alcohol and Drug Foundation** https://adf.org.au/drug-facts/medicinal-cannabis/

6. **Australian Drug Foundation and the Queensland Police Service**, fact sheet. Last updated 6 February, 2014

7. **Australia's National Research Centre on AOD Workforce Development**

8. https://cannabissupport.com.au/what-is-cannabis/

9. https://cannabissupport.com.au/cannabis-and-young-people/

10. https://www.qld.gov.au/law/crime-and-police/types-of-crime/drug-offences

11. https://www.drugsand.me/en/drugs/cannabis/

12. https://headspace.org.au/young-people/what-is-cannabis-and-the-effects-on-mental-health/

13. https://www.healthline.com/health/how-long-does-a-marijuana-high-last

14. https://cannabissupport.com.au/cannabis-potency/

15. Lenton, S., & Heale, P. (2000). Arrest, Court and Social Impacts of Conviction for a Minor Cannabis Offense under Strict Prohibition. *Contemporary Drug Problems*, *27*(4), 805–833. https://doi.org/10.1177/009145090002700405

16. https://cannabissupport.com.au/files/media/1922/bulletin-7-clinical-and-medico-legal-implications-of-drug-testing-for-cannabis.pdf

17. https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/drugtreat-pubs-front9-wk-toc~drugtreat-pubs-front9-wk-secb~drugtreat-pubs-front9-wk-secb-2~drugtreat-pubs-front9-wk-secb-2-1

Ask a friend, family member or health professional to help if serious about stopping cannabis.

Deafness and Mental Health Service

SMS: 0419 023 883

Email: Deafness_MHS@health.qld.gov.au

Web: https://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/referrals/statewide-specialist-services/deafness-and-mental-health

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Disclaimer

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