

## TAKING CARE

**It is safer not to use cannabis at all.**

However, if someone does, **remember:**

- Some people **have panic attacks** when they get 'stoned'. If this happens, **call for help** immediately and reassure them it will pass. Because of this, users **should not be left alone** as they can often find themselves in dangerous situations.
- Cannabis, like alcohol, slows reflexes, affecting reaction time and ability to carry out normal functions such as driving, swimming, and operating machinery.

## WANT MORE INFORMATION

[www.drugaware.com.au](http://www.drugaware.com.au)

Alcohol and Drug Information Service  
Confidential 24-hour information, counselling and referral.  
Telephone (08) 9442 5000  
Toll-free 1800 198 024 (country callers)

For additional copies of this resource please call  
9222 2045.

**Remember, many recreational drugs are illegal and serious penalties can apply.**

**CANNABIS**  
**The Health Effects**



## CANNABIS

Cannabis, hashish and hashish oil come from the Cannabis Sativa plant. This plant contains the chemical THC, which affects mood.

### APPEARANCE

Cannabis - dried greenish-brown leaves or flowers of the plant.

Hashish - brown to black resin.

Hashish oil - reddish brown oil.

### HOW IT IS USED

Cannabis is most commonly smoked as a joint or through a bong, but is occasionally cooked and eaten in foods.

## EFFECTS

The immediate effects of **low** doses of cannabis may include:

- Loss concentration
- Impaired balance
- Slower reflexes
- Increased appetite
- Increased heart rate
- Feeling of wellbeing
- Loss of inhibitions.

The immediate effects of **high** doses of cannabis may include:

- Confusion and anxiety
- Restlessness
- Detachment from reality
- Hallucinations
- Paranoia
- Panic attacks.

The effects of **frequent** cannabis use can include:

- **Dependence**, which means:
  - the drug is central to a person's life
  - the user has trouble cutting down his/her use
  - the user experiences symptoms of withdrawal when he/she tries to cut down
- **Psychological problems** - anxiety, depression, paranoia and psychosis in those people who have a vulnerability to mental health problems
- **Learning difficulties** - decreased concentration, memory and learning abilities
- **Respiratory problems** - increased risk of cancer and respiratory disorders such as asthma, bronchitis and emphysema.