

# REASONS TO CONSIDER QUITTING OR CUTTING DOWN

- You'll have more money
- You'll have more time for other things
- You'll have more motivation to do other things
- Your health will improve
- Reduced risk of legal problems
- You'll have better concentration

## HOW TO QUIT OR CUT DOWN:

- Start with deciding to reduce the amount you use
- Seek out other activities to fill your time and distract you
- Identify your triggers and have a plan to avoid them
- Remember that cravings are normal and usually will pass quickly
- Consider a support group like NA or SMART Recovery

## Help and Support

Remember, whether you want to quit or cut down, help is always available.

The HSE West Drugs Service is a good starting point for advice and support and can be contacted on **091 561299**

The Drug and Alcohol National helpline is **1800 459 459**

Websites that have good information and links to support services are:

[www.drugs.ie](http://www.drugs.ie)

[www.wrdatf.ie](http://www.wrdatf.ie)

[www.supportme.ie](http://www.supportme.ie)



# CANNABIS

An introduction to our most commonly used illegal drug

Dope

WEED

HASH

SKUNK

POT

Grass

GANJA

Marijuana

Herb



# WHAT IS CANNABIS?

Cannabis is a sedative drug with hallucinogenic properties that is traditionally derived from the Cannabis Sativa plant. It comes in several forms including herbal cannabis, cannabis resin, cannabis oil and also synthetic cannabinoids. The main active ingredient in cannabis is called delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol, commonly known as THC. This is the part of the plant that makes people feel stoned. There is a wide range of THC potency between cannabis products and the higher the amount the stronger the effect will be. Cannabis can be used in various ways such as smoked in joints or bongs, eaten or vaporised.

# SYNTHETIC CANNABINOIDS

Synthetic Cannabinoids are chemicals that attempt to mimic the effects of THC, such as *Spice*. They carry additional risks because users have no control over quality, strength and contaminants.

# WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF CANNABIS?

SHORT TERM	LONG TERM
You may feel relaxed, sedated, happy	Respiratory diseases; bronchitis
You may get the munchies or feel hungry	Decreased motivation
Nausea	Low mood and depression
Drowsiness	Dependency
Talkative, Giggly	Reproductive problems
Distorted sense of vision, hearing or touch	Decreased sex drive
Loss of co-ordination	May cause anxiety and paranoia
Increased heart rate, anxiety, panic attacks	May affect coordination and reactions
Tightness in chest or breathing	Headaches
Difficulty learning and remembering	Sleep problems
Trouble thinking and problem-solving	Psychosis
Red eyes	Decreased concentration
Dry mouth	Lung cancer

# SIGNS OF CANNABIS USE:

PHYSICAL CHANGES:	BEHAVIOURAL CHANGES	PARAPHERNALIA
Bloodshot eyes	Confusion and lack of focus	Pipes
Fast heart rate	Unusually talkative	Shredded leafy debris
Sleepy, lethargic	Dropping studies or usual activities	Cigarette rolling papers
Lack of coordination	Misjudging time	Very small bottles of oil or eyedroppers
Cravings for snacks	Secretiveness	Small metal clips

# HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU SHOULD CONSIDER...

**DEPENDENCY** Some people begin to use cannabis more and more often and can become dependent on the drug. This can lead to withdrawal symptoms, increased tolerance, giving up activities, using more than you intended and so on.

**THE LAW** Cannabis possession and supply is illegal in Ireland. You may be cautioned or charged under the Misuse of Drugs act.

**DRIVING** Driving under the influence of Cannabis can distort thinking, concentration and reactions. Gardaí have the power to test for cannabis use on the roadside. A driver who is discovered to have drugs in their system can be disqualified from driving for a year and there are penalties of a fine of up to €5,000 and up to six months in prison that may apply.

**MIXING WITH OTHER SUBSTANCES** Poly-drug use is never recommended, this also includes mixing alcohol with cannabis. Unexpected effects are possible and difficult to predict and control.

**PREGNANCY** Cannabis use is never safe during pregnancy, it can delay and impair a baby's development.

**MENTAL HEALTH** Cannabis contains dozens of psychoactive chemicals that can induce psychosis, panic and anxiety. Cannabis is a depressant drug. There is a risk to your mental health when any amount of cannabis is used.

**MEDICINAL USE** Certain types of medicalised Cannabis is being used to treat a wide variety of conditions and symptoms in other countries. Medical cannabis is currently unavailable in Ireland.