

CANNABIS CHECK



The purpose of Cannabis Check is to provide you with some useful information and practical tips around cannabis. It should only take about 10-15 minutes to complete.

WORKER'S NOTES

This tool is designed to help guide a conversation with someone who has concerns about their cannabis use. It is not intended to replace a full clinical intervention.

Please consider all risk, safety, consent and confidentiality issues before commencing. If now is not a good time, this resource can be taken away and read at a later date. A guide to using this tool can be found at www.insight.qld.edu.au

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DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH YOU SPEND ON CANNABIS?

You may need a calculator for this section:

Per week \$ (enter a dollar amount)

Per month \$ (multiply the weekly number by 4)

Per year \$ (multiply the monthly number by 13 to equal 52 weeks)

After buying cannabis, do you find that you have enough money left over for daily expenses?
e.g. food, rent, transport, bills...

Always Mostly Sometimes Rarely Never

START HERE!



DID YOU KNOW...

- ☐ Cannabis is a plant containing the psychoactive chemical called THC (tetrahydrocannabinol).
- ☐ The three main forms available are:
 - dried plant matter
 - hashish (dried resin)
 - hash oil.

(The strength or potency of each form varies depending on how much THC it contains.)

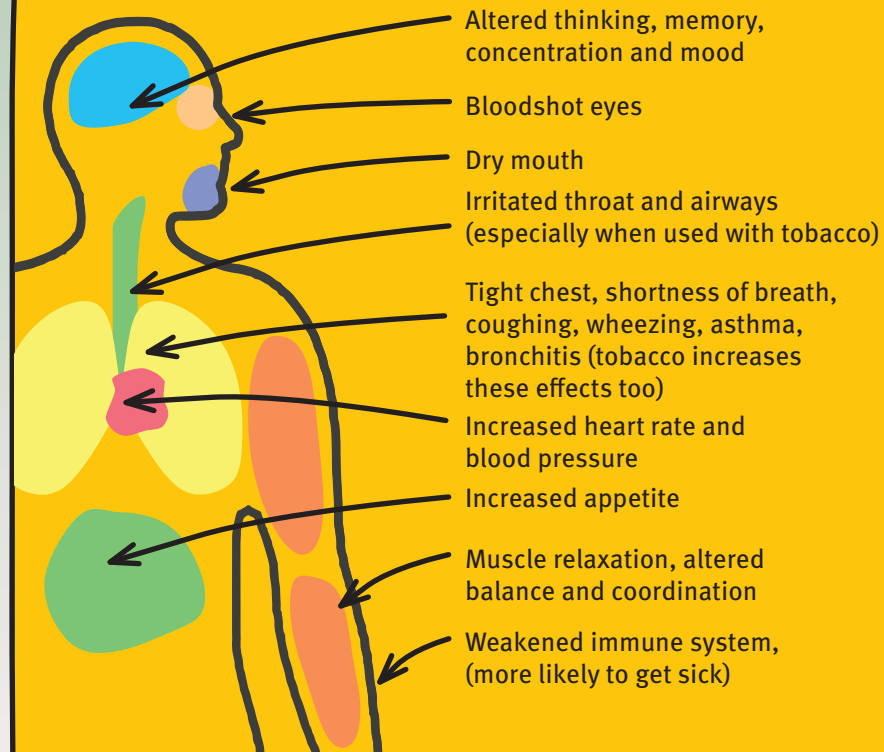
- ☐ Most people consume cannabis to feel a heightened sense of wellbeing or to feel relaxed.
- ☐ It is important to remember that there is no safe level of non-prescribed cannabis use.
- ☐ Some cannabis products can also be prescribed for certain medical conditions (medicinal cannabis).

WARNING

There are products manufactured and referred to as "synthetic cannabis". These products don't come from the cannabis plant.

These products are untested and the effects are unpredictable. Use of "synthetic cannabis" has caused significant health problems and deaths across Australia.

Common effects of cannabis include:



Remember, cannabis affects people differently depending on how strong it is, how much is consumed, and the individual characteristics of the user.

WHAT ARE THE GOOD BITS ABOUT USING CANNABIS?

WHAT ARE THE NOT-SO-GOOD BITS?

e.g. low mood, not getting things done, paranoia, anxiety, relationship problems, money problems, hassles with work/study, getting busted, losing license.

TOP TIP

It's good to know the reasons why you use cannabis. It affects where, when, how much and how often you use it.

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HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU HAD CANNABIS IN THE PAST 6 MONTHS?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Less than once per month?

DID YOU KNOW...

In 2016, 10.4% of Australians reported using cannabis in the last 12 months, with only 1.5% of Australians using cannabis everyday.*

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ON A SCALE FROM 1-10, HOW WORRIED ARE YOU ABOUT YOUR USE?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at all worried Very worried

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR YOU TO MAKE CHANGES TO YOUR USE?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not important Very important

Why did you give these scores?

What would it take for your score to go up or down?

*National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2016, AIHW

Turn the page over for more information

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TIPS TO STAY SAFE

Would you try any of these strategies below? (or maybe you do them already?)

WOULD YOU...	YES	MAYBE	NO
Set limits on how much you will use?			
Avoid cannabis in the morning?			
Delay cannabis use until later in the evening?			
Have a few cannabis-free days each week?			
Have 3 or 4 week breaks from cannabis each year?			

TOP TIP 1 - DON'T 'SPIN' WITH TOBACCO

Combining tobacco with your cannabis can lead you to become dependent on tobacco – which is known to cause serious physical health issues.

TOP TIP 2 - DON'T HOLD IN SMOKE

Inhaling deeply and holding in smoke will not make you feel any more high as THC is rapidly absorbed into the lungs. Holding in smoke will only increase the harms to your health.

TOP TIP 3 - USE A VAPORISER

Vaporisers work by heating up the cannabis enough that it releases its active ingredients as a vapor. They are the least risky way to consume cannabis and greatly reduce the risks to your health from inhaling smoke.



SMOKING IMPLEMENTS

Remember to clean bowls, cone pieces, pipes and bongs regularly to avoid infection. Avoid plastic, rubber, wood or aluminium bongs and pipes. Glass and stainless steel smoking implements are more hygienic.



BE CAREFUL EATING CANNABIS

It is difficult to know how much you have consumed when you eat cannabis. Try a small amount first and then wait up to 1-2 hours before having more.



HAVE A HEALTHY DIET

Some people are prone to eating large amounts of junk food when they are high. Try to eat healthily by having fruit, vegetables, grains, soup and pasta etc.



AVOID DRIVING

It is dangerous and illegal to drive or cycle with cannabis in your system. Police can conduct roadside drug testing, and cannabis can be detectable in your saliva for many hours after use.



MIND YOUR HEAD

Consuming cannabis when you are feeling vulnerable, anxious or paranoid can make these feelings worse. Mixing other drugs with cannabis (e.g. meth, MDMA, LSD) can also greatly amplify feelings of anxiety and paranoia, rather than making you feel relaxed.

If you experience strange or paranoid thoughts or hallucinations try to stay calm, find a safe place and sip water. If these symptoms do not go away, you should seek professional help.

For people with a family history of mental health concerns (e.g. bipolar or schizophrenia), cannabis use can increase the chances of developing symptoms or making these symptoms worse, even after single use.



HAD TOO MUCH?

Signs that you may have had too much cannabis include nausea, vomiting, anxiety, paranoia, hallucinations, seizures, headache and rapid heart rate.

Seek immediate medical assistance by calling triple zero (000) and ask for 'AMBULANCE'. If someone is unconscious and breathing, turn them on their side.

ARE YOU PREGNANT?

Using cannabis during pregnancy and while breastfeeding can effect your baby's body and brain development. Talk to a medical professional for advice.

ARE YOU UNDER 18?

Cannabis use in early life can increase risk of harm. It is recommended to delay use as long as possible, at least until you are 18, to reduce risk.

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THINKING ABOUT CUTTING BACK OR QUITTING?

Some people find it easier to cut back / quit with the support of family, friends and/or health professionals. There is more than one way of changing – everyone is different and it's important to think about what works for you.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS

WHY? – Write down why you want to quit or cut down. This could include money, saving a relationship, health benefits etc.

WHO? – Make sure you have as much support as possible. Try thinking of people who can support you.

WHAT? – Avoid things that will make you feel like using, such as places, people, stressful situations. This is especially important in the beginning.

CUT TIES – Throw out anything you associate with using (e.g. bongs / pipes) and cut connections to people associated with cannabis if possible (e.g. delete phone numbers). Practice saying no to the offer of cannabis.

CRAVINGS – Be prepared. These are uncomfortable but usually pass in a few minutes.

- **Delay** making a decision on whether or not to use for 5 minutes or up to half an hour, or longer.
- **Distract yourself** e.g. phone a friend, go for a walk, listen to music.
- **Deep breathing** and other relaxation techniques can help you stay calm.

LEARN NEW STRATEGIES – Cannabis use may be helping to manage anxiety, low mood, sleep trouble or pain. Seek support to find alternate ways to manage any concerns you might have.

WITHDRAWAL - WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU STOP

You can sometimes feel worse before you feel better (anxious, restless, irritable). You may experience loss of appetite and strange dreams. This can last for a month or more but it will get better over time.

TRY SOME SLEEP TIPS

Routine: Go to bed and wake up at the same time everyday.

Environment: Use your bedroom and bed for sleeping only. Make sure the room is dark, quiet and a comfortable temperature.

Diet: Eat high energy foods earlier in the day and avoid stimulants at night including caffeine and cigarettes.

Activity: Schedule enjoyable activities every day e.g. exercise, purposeful activities or getting outside in the sunlight during the day and social or relaxing activities at night.

CAN YOU THINK OF SOME PRACTICAL THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP YOU CUT BACK OR QUIT?

WHERE TO GO FOR MORE HELP...

Call the national Alcohol and Other Drug Hotline for free, confidential, 24 hour telephone counselling, advice and referral.

1800 250 015

MY PLAN FROM HERE IS...

insight
Centre for alcohol and other drug
training and workforce development

