



INFORMATION LEAFLET

Cannabis (hash and weed)

Why this leaflet?

This leaflet gives you information about cannabis. It tells you how cannabis can affect your health and your mood. And there are tips to help you make the right choices.

You can also watch this video →

Click on the picture or go to: government.nl/cannabis-leaflet



1 What negative effects can cannabis have?

Here is a list of negative effects that people *could* have when they use cannabis. It might not happen to you. The effects of cannabis are different for everyone.



- You can start feeling strange, in a way you didn't expect. Or you could experience a distorted reality that is unpleasant. This is called a bad trip. It can be very disturbing. You might feel panicky, gloomy or anxious. You might be nauseous. These feelings usually pass.



- Your reaction time can be slower, which increases the risk of having an accident. You can have more difficulty concentrating and problems with your memory.



- You can become passive or sluggish. You are less active and less interested in things.



- Smoking cannabis is bad for your heart and your lungs. You get mucus in your lungs, which can make you cough. Your heart could beat faster or less regularly. You could faint. There is a small risk that you could have a heart attack or a stroke.



- You can become addicted to cannabis. This means you can no longer control your cannabis use. And it negatively affects your life.



- You could have psychosis. This means you hear, see or think things that others don't hear, see or think. This could make you feel anxious or confused.

2 Some people should take extra care with cannabis. Don't use cannabis if you...



- ...want to become pregnant, are pregnant or are breastfeeding. Cannabis is harmful for your unborn child or baby.

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- ...are young. Your brain keeps developing until you are 25. You have a higher risk of becoming addicted. And of getting psychosis.



- ...have experienced psychosis before or you have schizophrenia. Don't use cannabis if there are people in your family with schizophrenia or a history of psychosis. Using cannabis could trigger these symptoms in you.



- ...have depression or anxiety. Using cannabis could make you feel worse.






- ...are driving. Operating a vehicle is dangerous because cannabis makes you react more slowly. One of the active ingredients in cannabis is THC. You could still have too much THC in your blood even if you don't feel the effects anymore. Driving when you exceed the legal limit for THC in your blood is a criminal offence.



- ...are going to work or to school. Cannabis makes it harder to focus and remember things, and makes you react more slowly. This increases your risk of having an accident.

3 The three most common ways of using cannabis:

Method	How does it work?	How long until you start feeling the effects?	How long do the effects last?*	Good to know
 Smoking	You can smoke ('puff') cannabis by rolling it into a joint, either with tobacco or without. Smoking cannabis with tobacco produces different effects than smoking it on its own.	A few seconds / minutes	At least 3 – 6 hours	Smoking cannabis is harmful for your health. Adding tobacco to the joint makes it even more harmful. If you smoke cannabis (weed) without tobacco, don't pack in an extra large amount of weed.
 Vaporising	You can use a vaporiser to heat the cannabis, so that you can inhale the vapour. A vaporiser doesn't burn the cannabis and you don't use it with tobacco. A vaporiser isn't the same as a vape pen, shisha pen or e-cigarette. These are filled with a liquid that often contains nicotine.	A few seconds / minutes	At least 3 – 6 hours	Inhaling cannabis on its own avoids exposure to harmful substances from smoking it with tobacco. But inhaling cannabis with a vaporiser can be harmful too. Ask your cannabis café for advice.
 Eating	You can eat cannabis with food. For example, you can add it as an ingredient when baking a cake ('space cake'). Another name for food containing cannabis is 'edibles'.	From 30 – 90 minutes	At least 4 – 12 hours	The effects can be more intense than you expect. It can also take longer before you start feeling them. Don't take more cannabis if you don't feel high yet. You might end up taking too much. This can make you feel sick.

*It isn't possible to say exactly how long the effects will last. This is different for everyone.

4 Tips to reduce the risk of negative effects

- The lower the THC content, the smaller your chance of experiencing negative effects. Choose a product with a low THC content. You can find the THC content on the label.
- If you're not used to taking cannabis, choose a product with a low THC content and use only a small amount. Start slowly and find out how you respond to it first.
- Don't use cannabis often and don't use it in large amounts. Keep it for special occasions. Don't make it a habit.
- Don't use cannabis with alcohol or other drugs. If you use medication, ask your pharmacist for advice.
- Don't use cannabis if you're feeling low. It could make you feel worse.
- Don't inhale too deeply or too long. This is even worse for your lungs.
- Find out what you can do if you or someone else has a bad trip at [drugsinfo.nl/drugs/wat-kun-je-doen-bij-een-bad-trip](https://www.drugsinfo.nl/drugs/wat-kun-je-doen-bij-een-bad-trip).

5 Support, advice and questions

Support and advice are available, even if you only have a few questions.

- You can ask a staff member at the cannabis café for advice.
- You can call the drugs helpline (Drugsinfolijn): 0900 1995 (€ 0.10 per minute, mobile providers may charge extra). Or you can email or chat with the helpline (go to www.drugsinfo.nl).
- You can make an appointment with an expert near you. An advisory talk is free of charge. Go to a [drugsinfo.nl/hulp/professionele-hulp](https://www.drugsinfo.nl/hulp/professionele-hulp)
- You can talk to your doctor if you experience negative effects or need help quitting cannabis.
- If you sometimes think about reducing your cannabis use, or quitting, go to [drugsinfo.nl/cannabis/hoer-stoppen-met-blouwen](https://www.drugsinfo.nl/cannabis/hoer-stoppen-met-blouwen) voor meer informatie.

6 The law and the experiment with a controlled cannabis supply chain

Cannabis is illegal in the Netherlands but possession of up to 5 grams of cannabis is not punished. Cannabis cafés ('coffeeshops') may sell up to 5 grams of cannabis per person per day.

The cannabis cafés in the municipality where you bought this product are taking part in an experiment with a controlled supply of cannabis to coffee shops. To find out more about this experiment, go to [government.nl/topics/drugs/controlled-cannabis-supply-chain-experiment](https://www.government.nl/topics/drugs/controlled-cannabis-supply-chain-experiment).



Controlled cannabis
supply chain **Experiment**