



# Cannabis

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**CNAPA**  
Centre National  
de Prévention des Addictions





Flowers of the cannabis plant:  
marihuana, ganja, weed, grass, ...

Pressed resin of the cannabis  
plant: hashish, hash, shit...

Cannabis is a plant genus belonging to the hemp family. Hemp is one of mankind's oldest crops and cultivated plants. Hemp has been cultivated for numerous purposes for several thousand years (*e.g. for producing textiles, ropes, paper*). Moreover, cannabis has always been used as a medicine and drug.

The following information refers to  
cannabis as a drug.



## Main active ingredient

- THC (*delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol*)



## Legal status

- Illegal: consumption, possession, acquisition, cultivation and dealing are prohibited



## Consumption modalities

- Mainly smoked: mixed with tobacco or pure (*joint, wick, bong,...*)
- Inhaled (*vaporiser*)
- Eaten or drunk (*cake, tea...*)





## Onset and duration of effect

- **Smoked/inhaled:**
  - Onset: after a few minutes
  - Duration approx. 2-3 hours
- **Eaten/drunk:**
  - Onset: after approx. 30 minutes to 2 hours
  - Duration: several hours



## Effects

- Relaxing, calming
- Calmness, sense of well-being
- Unprovoked mirth (*fits of laughter*)
- Heightened pleasant sensations
- Altered sensory perception: heightened perception of touch, taste and sounds, mildly hallucinogenic
- Distorted sense of time
- Altered thought processes, mental leaps
- Stimulates the appetite



## Risks and side effects

- Heightened unpleasant sensations
- Impaired concentration, attentiveness and memory
- Reduced motivation
- Bouts of anxiety and panic
- Fatigue, slower reactivity
- Reddening of the eyes, greater sensitivity to light
- Cardiac and circulatory problems, dizziness



## Long-term risks

- Addiction
- Psychosis (*e.g. delusions, lost sense of reality*)
- Depressive symptoms
- If smoked: diseases of the airways and respiratory organs, cancers, cardiac and circulatory ailments
- If smoked in conjunction with tobacco: additional risk of nicotine addiction



## Worth knowing...

- ✓ Cannabis (*THC*) is illegal in Luxembourg. No “small quantities” are permitted.
- ✓ Cannabis is the most widely consumed illegal drug in Europe.
- ✓ The THC content in cannabis products can differ greatly and is typically between 5-30%.
- ✓ As there is no official quality control, the consumer is unaware of cannabis products' THC content and the desired and undesired effects are difficult to predict.
- ✓ Anyone consuming cannabis should not drive. There is a heightened risk of accident, and the driving licence is at risk. Cannabis can be detected by a saliva test during a vehicle road check.
- ✓ Depending on consumption frequency and intensity, cannabis (*and its metabolites*) can still be detected in the body days, weeks or even months after last being consumed.
- ✓ THC is the cannabinoid primarily responsible for cannabis intoxication. But cannabis contains numerous other cannabinoids as well. Yet another cannabinoid is CBD (*cannabidiol*), a cannabinoid with scarcely any psychoactive effect. Cannabis products containing CBD with less than 0.3% THC are permitted in Luxembourg.



## Is cannabis a natural product?

- Whether a drug is a natural product or laboratory-made says nothing about the danger it poses. It is how it is used that is critical.
- Moreover, nowadays cannabis is so genetically manipulated that it is no longer possible to talk about a natural drug.

## Does cannabis consumption induce passivity and reduce motivation?

- So far there is no evidence for the existence of a long-term “amotivational syndrome” as a consequence of cannabis consumption.
- During intoxication, cannabis certainly can reinforce symptoms such as apathy, lower motivation, reduced resilience, or passivity, but does not necessarily induce them.
- As yet, there is no evidence of a persistent “can’t be bothered” attitude among consumers purely as a consequence of cannabis consumption.

## Is cannabis a gateway drug?

- The assumption that cannabis users “automatically” move on to other illegal drugs after a while is deemed to have been refuted.
- Even if almost all heroin consumers started with cannabis as their first illegal drug, one cannot reverse the argument and deduce that all cannabis consumers necessarily consume other drugs.
- It is much more the case that the large majority do not consume any illegal drugs other than cannabis during their lives.



## Can cannabis cause a psychosis?

- Depending on the personal disposition, the consumption of cannabis (*as with many other legal and illegal drugs*) can lead to a greater risk of succumbing to a psychosis than non-consumers.
- It is best not to consume cannabis if a family member suffers from a psychosis. Or if you have already noticed a predisposition in yourself such as the sensation of being followed, or being unable to control one's thoughts.
- Be that as it may, psychotic states may occur during cannabis consumption – but these typically disappear again when the effect wears off.

## Can cannabis be used medicinally?

- Here have been reports to this effect time and again over the millennia and the therapeutic use of cannabis is corroborated by modern science.
- In addition to THC, the cannabidiol (*CBD*) contained in cannabis is a particular subject of medical research.
- Specially trained doctors in Luxembourg have been allowed to prescribe cannabis containing THC to alleviate particular ailments since 2019: muscle cramps in the case of multiple sclerosis (*MS*), nausea and vomiting in the case of chemotherapy following cancer, and in the case of chronic pains.
- **But please be careful:** although cannabis can have a medical benefit it is not a panacea.

**Speak to your doctor!**



## There is no such thing as a risk-free consumption of legal and illegal drugs!

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When consuming any legal and illegal drug, the subjectively perceived effects depend on various factors (*how consumed, dose, age, gender, environment, mood as well as experience and expectation*).

**Consumption of any drug can result in addiction.**

**The consumption of legal and illegal drugs is to be discouraged:**

- In adolescence (*physical and mental development*)
- When driving and during other activities requiring a “clear head” (*e.g. sport, when operating machinery...*)
- In the workplace / in school
- During pregnancy and breastfeeding
- If there are previous medical conditions

**Particular care is also required:**

- If the quality of the product is unknown and cannot be checked
- In the event of combined use, e.g. alcohol and other drugs
- When medication is taken at the same time

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If you notice that a person is not well after having consumed legal or illegal drugs, act responsibly and look after that person. If in doubt, phone the emergency number and administer first aid.



# 112



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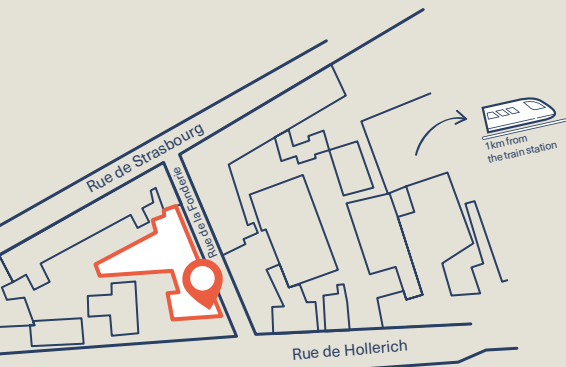
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