

CANNABIS

Street Names

Pot, Weed, Grass, Mary Jane, Roach, Reefer, Joint, THC, Dope, Ganja, Shit, Blow, Spliff, Hash, Hashish, Marijuana, Skunk, Northern Lights, Bhang.

Description

A green leafy plant. It can be sold as 'grass' (leaves, stalks and seeds) or as 'hashish/hash' (a solid brown block).

Routes of Use

Smoked, ingested (eaten or drunk as a brew).

History

Cannabis has a long history as being a herbal medicine, primarily in ancient eastern civilisations. Up until 1973 it was available on prescription in this country. Its recreational use has followed its medicinal uses through time. It has been used for relaxation and an aid for delirium tremens, period pains, insomnia and headaches. Drugs derived from the Tetrahydrocannabinol molecule are being used to prevent nausea and relieve pain in AIDS and chemotherapy patients. Its use for recreation became popular in this country in the late 50's and early 60's probably due to its introduction by immigrant populations.

Effects People Seek

The effects of cannabis use depend on the expectations of the user and their state of mind prior to use. Cannabis is used as a relaxant making people feel more conversant and provides enhancement of music and images, giving a pleasant feeling of euphoria. If a person is feeling tense prior to use, they can develop feelings of paranoia and agitation afterwards.

Other Effects

It is difficult to overdose on cannabis because you would need to smoke or consume very large amounts of the drug. Effects on short-term memory loss have been known to occur but long-term memory effects are unclear. Most of the ill effects of cannabis use are due to smoking it especially when mixed with tobacco. Bronchitis and lung cancer can occur due to the high tar content and it is thought that cannabis may be responsible for some cancers itself.

Dependence & Tolerance

There is no physical dependence from cannabis use. Some mild withdrawal symptoms have been reported. A psychological dependence may arise after regular, chronic use.

The Law

After considering the evidence in a recent report, the government has said that they intend to reclassify cannabis as a Class B drug and are looking to do this by the end of the year. Currently cannabis is a Class C drug. It's illegal to have, sell or give away. The maximum penalty of possessing cannabis is 2 years in prison, and the maximum you can get for dealing is 14 years in prison. If and when it becomes a Class B drug, it will still be illegal to have, sell or give away. The maximum penalty for possession for personal use will go up to 5 years in prison and a maximum of 14 years for dealing.