

Did You Know?

Cannabis can affect you after the noticeable 'high' wears off.

THC is the main psychoactive chemical in cannabis. Effects vary with strength, amount, frequency, the individual and other substances used. Feeling 'back to normal' does not necessarily mean every effect relevant to concentration, judgement or driving has disappeared.

Cannabis: Effects, Dependence & Safety

Memory • concentration • mental health • driving

What can cannabis affect?

Short-term effects can include problems with memory and concentration, altered perception, anxiety or paranoia, impaired judgement and reduced coordination. Regular use can lead to dependence in some people.

Quick facts

THC

Produces the main intoxicating 'high'.

STRENGTH

Higher THC content can increase risks.

MENTAL HEALTH

Cannabis can worsen anxiety or paranoia and is linked with psychosis risk in some people.

DEPENDENCE

Regular use can lead to cravings and withdrawal.

DRIVING & CANNABIS

It is illegal to drive if drugs make you unfit, or if specified drug levels are above the legal limit. Do not use how 'high' you feel as a driving test.

Possible withdrawal

- Cravings
- Irritability
- Anxiety or restlessness
- Low mood
- Difficulty sleeping
- Vivid dreams
- Reduced appetite
- Difficulty concentrating

Mental health

Cannabis does not affect everyone in the same way. Some people experience anxiety, panic, paranoia or hallucinations. Regular cannabis use is associated with an increased risk of psychotic illness in some people, and higher-THC products carry greater risks.

Notice the pattern

Using cannabis to manage stress or difficult feelings can sometimes create a cycle where short-term relief is followed by worsening concentration, motivation, anxiety or mood.

Memory & concentration

Cannabis can interfere with short-term memory, learning, attention, problem-solving and coordination. These effects matter for work, study, caring responsibilities and safety.

Strength matters

THC content can vary considerably. NHS guidance notes that risks generally increase as THC content increases. Illicit products may also have uncertain strength or contents.

Need support?

If cannabis is affecting your mental health, relationships, work or daily life, speak to your GP or a local drug and alcohol service. Support is available without judgement.

Sources: NHS • NHS England • GOV.UK drug-driving guidance | Space to Breathe Therapy