

LINNELL PUBLICATIONS PRESENT

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

# CANNABIS

FOR THOSE WHO CAN'T BE BOTHERED  
READING FOR LONGER THAN TEN MINUTES



EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT  
**CANNABIS**

*This leaflet is aimed at young people who want to make an informed decision about cannabis, but can't be bothered to spend longer than ten minutes being informed (we understand, life's too short).*

# CANNABIS A MASS DEBATE ?

***Having an honest debate about cannabis use in our society is difficult, because people fundamentally disagree with just about everything to do with it.***

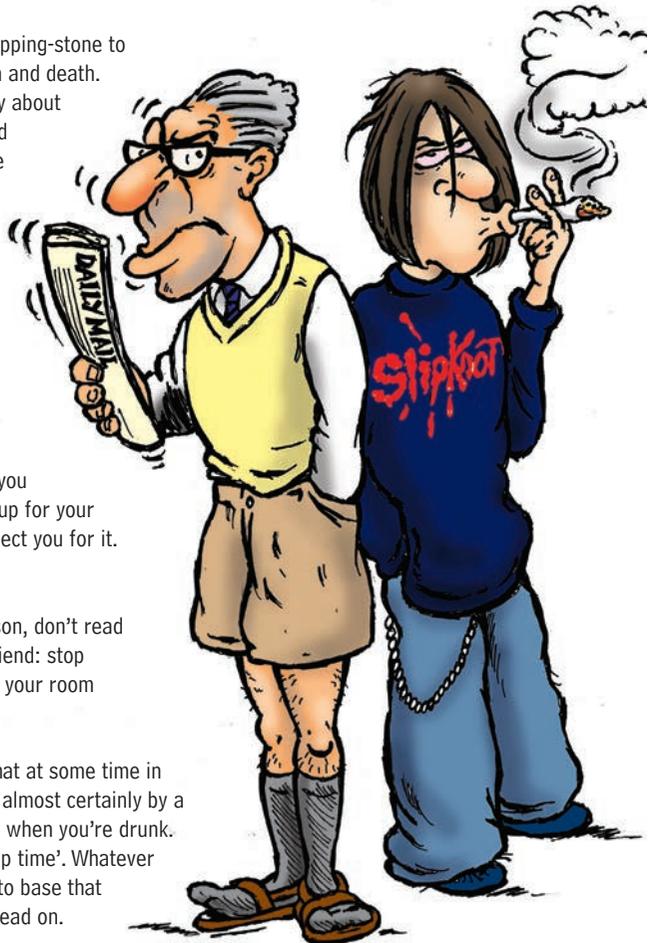
Some people believe that cannabis is a 'safe' wonder drug and this world would be a better place if more people smoked the sacred 'erb'. They believe cannabis smokers are persecuted for a victimless crime and that taking a chemical to alter the way you feel should be an individual choice. Mind you these tend to be people who are stoned out of their box most of the time.

Some people believe cannabis is a stepping-stone to drugs of addiction, prostitution, prison and death. They even believe that talking honestly about cannabis will encourage feeble minded young people to use it. Mind you these people tend to wear open toed sandals with socks and believe what they read in the Daily Mail. Often the people who hold this view are the parents of those with the opposite view.

If you're a young person who has already decided they don't want to smoke cannabis for whatever reason, don't smoke it; nobody is going to tie you to railway tracks and force you. Stick up for your decision and other people should respect you for it. If they don't it's their problem.

If you are a feeble minded young person, don't read any further or you'll turn into a dope fiend: stop playing with yourself, go upstairs, tidy your room and do your homework.

For the rest of you, the chances are that at some time in your life you will be offered cannabis, almost certainly by a friend or someone you know, probably when you're drunk. At that moment 'it's make your mind up time'. Whatever decision you make it is always better to base that decision on accurate information, so read on.



# THE DOPE SMOKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY



***Weed, Draw, Blow, Bush, Green, Black, Puft,  
Sensi, Rocky, Zero Zero, Marijuana, Grass, Home-grown, Pot, White Widow,  
Maui Wauii, Nepalese Temple Balls, Neder Weed, Skunk, Wacky Backy, etc....***

... are all nicknames for a product that comes from a plant that grows all over the world.... Cannabis. It has been used throughout history for making rope and oil etc, but hey, who cares about that!

Cannabis is the most widely used illegal drug in Britain, Europe, the Earth and for all we know, among intelligent (and stupid) life forms, in the rest of the galaxy. Although (roughly) 67.3% of statistics about drugs are made up, it is thought that up to 1 in 4 young people will have tried cannabis before their 16th birthday. The average 16-year-old cannabis smoker is...well, average.

# THE AGE OF RESIN

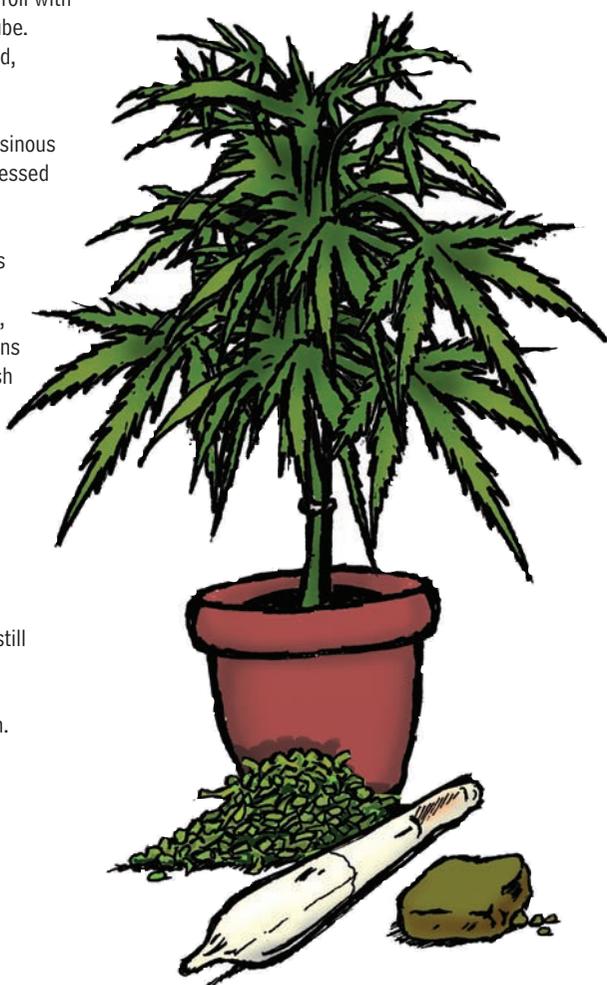
***Unless you are planning a weekend in Amsterdam, the choice of cannabis available in Britain is limited to two main types, resin or grass, and your choice of grass is usually limited to skunk.***

Resin (often called hashish or hash) comes in block form – looking like a piece of liquorice, rubber or brown slate. If it looks like a beef cube and smells beefy, or it is wrapped in silver foil with the words 'Oxo' on, it probably is a beef cube. The resin in Britain is imported from abroad, usually North Africa.

Hashish, in its purest form, is the sticky resinous glands from the plants flowering heads, pressed together into a potent block.

Most of the hash on sale in Britain contains other less powerful parts of the plant (like the leaves and stalks) along with dust, camel dung and anything else which happens to be lying around. Cheap Moroccan hashish – known as 'soap-bar' or 'formula' – is the most adulterated drug on the market.

Herbal cannabis or grass is just the dried leaves or buds and flowers of the plant. The colour ranges from green to yellow. The buds (the strong bits of the plant) are more brownly or purple. Although grass is still imported most of what you buy these days is 'skunk' that is grown in Britain. Skunk is much stronger than grass or resin.



# SKIN UP!

Skunk or herbal cannabis is often smoked neat without tobacco. Resin is usually mixed with tobacco and using one or more cigarette papers rolled into a cannabis cigarette known as a joint or spliff. A small piece of cardboard is rolled into a tube (known as a 'roach') and inserted in the end; this is to stop the smoke from being too harsh. This process is known as 'skinning up'.



Cannabis can also be smoked in a variety of pipes and contraptions, either home made or bought from shops. One of the most popular smoking devices is the bong – a tube-like water pipe, usually made of plastic or glass. Smoking cannabis is usually a social activity, so joints are made bigger than cigarettes so that a group can pass the joint around and get stoned together.



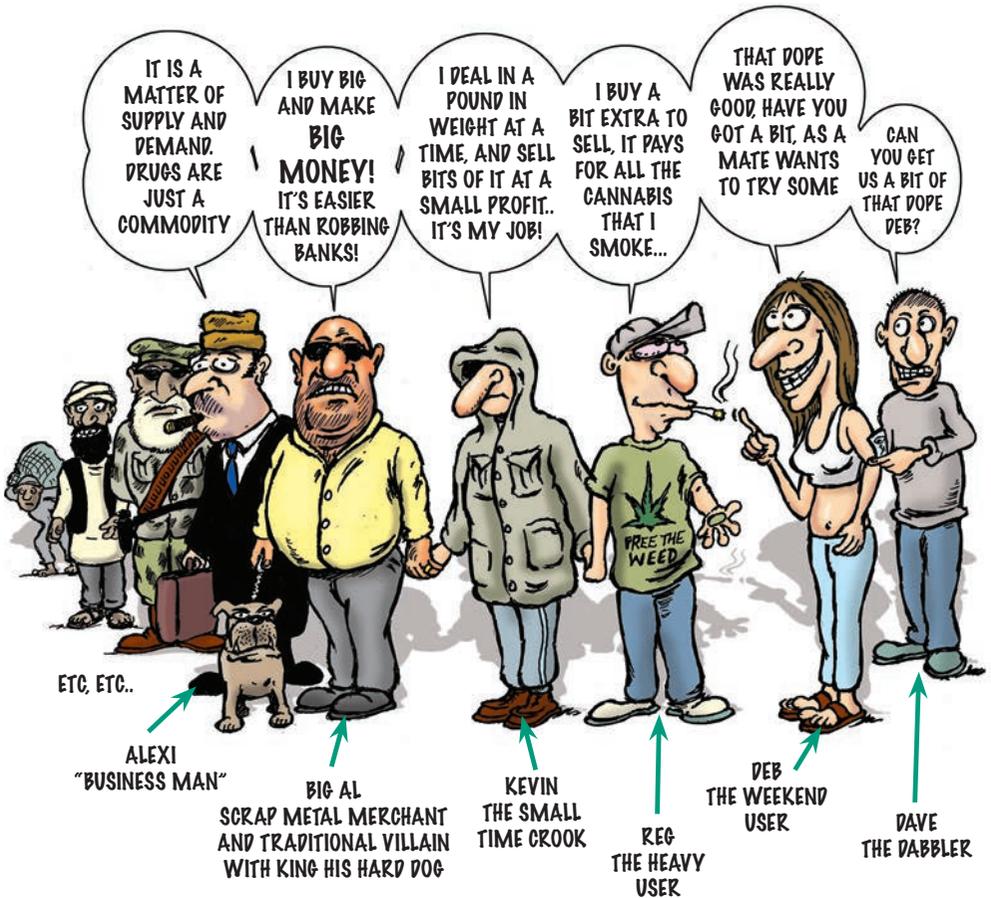
Cannabis can also be eaten (usually in cakes or cookies), but this can make the effects much stronger and more unpredictable, so most people prefer to smoke it.

# AHHH...CANNABIS

Cannabis has a very distinctive rich aromatic almost sickly smell a bit like....well cannabis really; there is nothing that smells quite the same – though incense and patchouli oil smell similar (and so are sometimes used to cover up the smell of cannabis). The fact that the aroma of cannabis is so distinctive and a joint smoked in a bedroom can be smelt by your mum even when she's out shopping is one of Mother Nature's little jokes. Many a parent of a cannabis user has worried that their child has started sniffing air freshener...



# LET'S SCORE



Buying cannabis is relatively easy. Most people buy a small amount from their friends, or a friend of a friend, or some small time dealer in a pub or club, or from a well-known dealer's house. Cannabis has traditionally been sold by weight – you pay more per weight for smaller quantities, less for larger amounts – however over the last few years things have changed. Over the last few years cannabis has become more expensive, so is often sold by amounts of money (£5, £10, £20, £40 deals etc), rather than by weight.

# WHAT'S IT LIKE TO GET STONED?

*Different people get different things out of smoking cannabis:*

## *Some get the munchies*

(will eat anything, but chocolate and pizza are popular)



## *Some get the giggles*

(will laugh at anything)

THEY'RE WATCHING ME THROUGH THE T.V. THEY LISTEN IN TO MY PHONE CALLS. THEY'RE LOOKING AT ME NOW!



## *Others get paranoid*



*Others feel sick* (especially if they have been drinking alcohol). Some cannabis users experience 'whities' – a dizzy feeling like you are about to pass out (some actually do, though its usually brief).

***The effects of cannabis depend on how strong the cannabis is and how much you smoke.***

Taking a couple of puffs on a joint of low purity cannabis will make you feel relaxed (like a quick pint, glass of wine or gin and tonic). Smoking a lot of high purity stuff can make you feel really stoned and in some cases be quite psychedelic (mind bending).

Many first time smokers of cannabis don't think anything is happening to them yet seem to find the fact that nothing is happening extremely funny. This is because they are expecting something dramatic or the same effects as alcohol.

The effects of cannabis if smoked come on within a few minutes but can be quite subtle and take some time to get used to. If cannabis is eaten raw or baked into cookies or 'space' cakes the effects take longer to come on and can come on all at once.



The nausea (feeling sick) and paranoia usually pass quickly and then the user settles down to enjoy being 'stoned' (intoxicated). People learn to enjoy cannabis by trial and error. Short-term bad effects (nausea and paranoia) are tolerated because the good effects quickly follow.

Some people say cannabis makes them feel relaxed and sexy. It improves their appreciation of music and the arts. It can even make watching daytime television interesting. It gives them everything alcohol does without the hangover.

# THE LAW



***Illegal drugs (known as controlled drugs) are put into three categories class A, class B and class C.***

Class A drugs are thought to be the most dangerous and carry the most severe penalties: class C drugs are thought to be the least dangerous and carry the least severe penalties. Since 2009 cannabis has been a class B drug.

Possession, means that you are caught with an illegal drug in your pocket, bag, car, house etc. The maximum penalty for possession of cannabis, is up to 5 years in custody, while the maximum sentence for dealing cannabis is 14 years. However, if you are aged 18 or over and you are caught with a 'small' amount of cannabis, in most cases (provided you admit to it) the police simply take your name and address (you can be arrested for giving a false name and address), confiscate your cannabis, and send you on your way with a Cannabis Warning. But you can still be arrested and charged with possession if you are caught near a school, or with a 'large' amount or you are uncooperative.

If you are caught in possession of cannabis for a second time, you will receive a 'penalty notice for disorder' (PND) – which means that the police will issue you with an £90 spot-fine (a bit like getting a parking ticket). People caught in possession of cannabis more than two times will either be cautioned at a police station (a formal written warning) or prosecuted in court.

*In Scotland, the police can also deal with minor cannabis offences by a 'fiscal fine' rather than the law courts.*

# THE LAW

***Although in theory you could still receive a prison sentence for possession of cannabis, this is not what happens in practice.***

If you are 18 or over you will most likely receive a caution (a sort of written telling off) or at worst a small fine. A prison sentence for possession of cannabis is extremely rare. To get a caution you have to admit the offence. A caution can still be brought up as evidence if you appear in court again and is kept on record.

Being done for simple possession means that the police accept that the drug was for your personal use only. If the police believe that you intended to sell or give away cannabis to somebody else they can charge you with possession with intent to supply. If they can prove that you actually did sell or supply then you can be charged with supply.

Supplying cannabis is much more likely to involve a prison sentence, though this is often suspended (you stay out of prison provided you behave) and depends on a number of things like how much you are caught with, your background, previous convictions etc. There are other offences for growing cannabis plants, allowing your house to be used for taking the drug etc. The vast majority of drugs offences involve cannabis possession.

## ***and now for the bad news***

If you are caught with cannabis and you are under 18 you may still be arrested. This means that you will be taken to a police station where you will either receive a Youth Caution (like an adult caution) or a Youth Conditional Caution. If you have already received a Youth Caution you will almost certainly get a Youth Conditional Caution, if you have already received a Youth Conditional Caution you will almost certainly be charged. Getting a Youth Conditional Caution means you will have to regularly visit a youth offending team or see a drugs worker in one of these teams for a set period of time and may have visits from social services (the younger you are the more likely this is to happen). In all cases with under 18s your parents or carers will be informed.



# THE DANGERS

The truth is there is no such thing as a safe drug, but the lethal dose of cannabis is a 2 Kilo block....dropped on your head from the 25th floor of a high-rise building. In other words cannabis won't kill you. The more you smoke the more stoned you get. Carry on and you'll fall asleep. However, the usual warnings about any kind of intoxication apply and driving under the influence of cannabis is dangerous to you and other people, and it's illegal.

Smoking cannabis is harmful to your lungs and although it doesn't seem to cause cancer in the same way as cigarettes, it can still cause a number of serious smoking related illnesses if used over a period of years.

Some people maintain that cannabis can make you lazy and unmotivated, developing a severe case of 'mañana' ("I'll do it tomorrow"). Others claim it is lazy unmotivated people who are attracted to cannabis in the first place. Short-term memory loss can also occur while you are under the influence ("what was it I was going to do tomorrow"). Many students have learned that there is no point in reading a textbook after smoking cannabis as you forget what you have read . . . and may even forget what you have read.

Exam revision and cannabis DO NOT MIX.

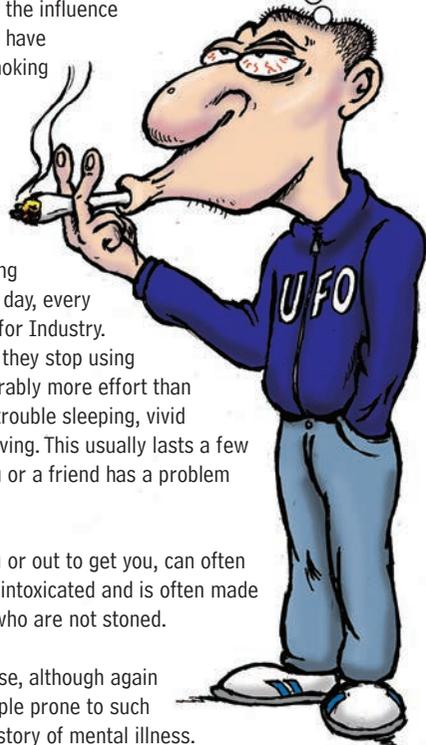
The use of any drug can become a habit. Cannabis is not physically addictive like cigarettes or alcohol, but regular long term heavy users, 'cannabis couch potatoes', who spend all day, every day smoking weed, are unlikely to win any Queen's Awards for Industry. Regular heavy users can also experience mild withdrawal if they stop using as the sudden realisation that having a life involves considerably more effort than smoking dope. Cannabis withdrawal symptoms can include trouble sleeping, vivid dreams, sweaty hands, loss of appetite, moodiness, and craving. This usually lasts a few days, but can go on longer. Help is available, if you think you or a friend has a problem (see back page).

Paranoia – an irrational fear that somebody is watching you or out to get you, can often occur when smoking cannabis. This only lasts while you are intoxicated and is often made worse if you are in unfamiliar surroundings or with people who are not stoned.

Cannabis may make any depression, anxiety or worries worse, although again this should only last whilst you are under the influence. People prone to such feelings should avoid cannabis, as should anybody with a history of mental illness.



NOW YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO DO SOMETHING WHEN A HEAVY OBJECT IS GOING TO LAND ON YOU?



Cannabis use may trigger existing mental illness in those who are prone to it, while some people have made claims it may actually cause the illness in the first place, although the evidence for this is far from clear. People who smoke cannabis are more likely to develop a type of mental illness called psychosis (or schizophrenia), but people who develop psychosis are also more likely to smoke cannabis, so it may be a chicken and egg situation in that people who start to experience these symptoms turn to cannabis and other drugs.

The governments own body of experts after reviewing the evidence said – “the use of cannabis makes (at worst) only a small contribution to an individual’s risk of developing schizophrenia.” ACMD 2006. Either way there is still a risk, even if that risk is small, so, if you don’t want to take the risk – don’t smoke it!

A recent study has also found a link between people classed as ‘dependent’ on cannabis before the age of 18 (heavy, regular use) and a reduction in scores on IQ tests later in life. In other words, heavy cannabis use before 18 may make you more ‘dumberer’.

Although cannabis is relatively cheap if used in moderation, it can become expensive if used in excess or if your only source of income is pocket money, this can lead to trouble. For young people the most common problems happen when you get caught, either at school or by the police or worst of all your parents.



# AND FINALLY...

## *The most common danger with cannabis is still the risk of getting caught . . .*

Cannabis has been smoked for pleasure for thousands of years. Nobody can predict what will happen to anybody who uses cannabis anymore than they can to anybody who doesn't. Those that argue that cannabis leads to harder drugs like heroin, tend to forget or ignore the fact that the first drugs used by young people (often illegally) are cigarettes and alcohol. It would be stupid to argue that cigarettes lead to heroin use. A lot of people who are now both parents and grandparents smoked cannabis when they were younger...



Contact details for local drug help services can be found at [talktofrank.com](http://talktofrank.com)

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**[>]** aims  
To provide accurate information about cannabis, its dangers and its legal status. It is designed to provide a framework for debate.

**[>]** audience  
Young people aged 13 to 17. Use with under 16s with support.

**[v]** content  
No swearing, cartoon images of drug taking and sex scenes.

**[£]** funding  
Self-financed.



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