

Cannabis



How does it work? (Circle what you think)

Slows you down

Alters your perceptions

Speeds you and/or everything up

What type of drug is cannabis?

Mild sedative

Mild hallucinogenic

Stimulant

Depressant

What do the following statements mean?

Hallucinogenic -

Depressant -

Stimulant -

Sedative -

Can you list some of the street names for cannabis?

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Can you list common ways people use cannabis?

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Here comes a bit of science

When you use cannabis, the chemical which gets you stoned Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) attaches itself to cannabinoid receptors located in the brain and can cause varying effects.

Can you jot down some of the effects which you've experienced from using cannabis; these effects can be both positive and negative.

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Cannabis is a milder hallucinogenic drug than other hallucinogens such as Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD) or Magic Mushrooms (Psilocybin). However, all hallucinogenic drugs can cause individuals to have 'imagined' experiences or feelings which the individual will describe as feeling very real to them during the time of the

hallucinogenic effect, but it is part of the 'trip' they are experiencing. Due to the mild hallucinogenic properties of cannabis, users will often confuse reality with illusion.

Cannabis can affect the way we see, make sense of, or understand things - our perceptions. It changes the way our five senses work; impressions of time (how quickly or slowly it may go) and space (how far away or how close you are from something).

Have your five senses ever been affected by cannabis use, and if so how?

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Look at these 2 visual illusions which demonstrate how easily our perceptions can be affected or altered.

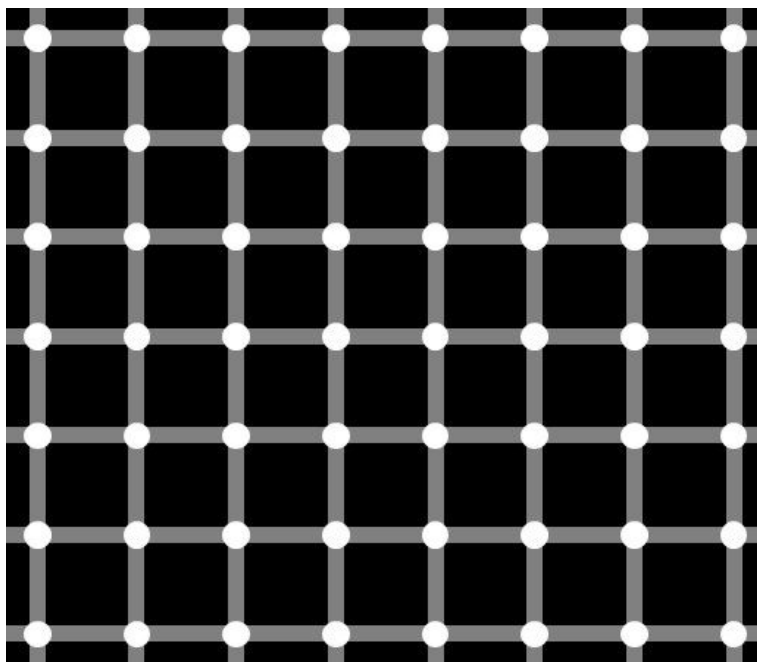


A vase or 2 faces?



What do you see here?

What's going on here, are the white spots blinking at you?



An area of the brain which can be affected by cannabis is the Hippocampus. The word Hippocampus comes from the Greek language- 'Hippo' meaning horse and 'Kampo' meaning monster, by putting the 2 words together the word 'seahorse' is formed, as the shape of the Hippocampus resembles a seahorse.

This area of the brain is responsible for processing memory and cannabis use will affect both the short-term memory and long-term memory of the user. Short-term memory loss restricts and hinders the ability to remember new information and therefore makes learning something new difficult, in addition to this, the Hippocampus

is where short-term memories are turned into long-term memories. The

Hippocampus can be affected by high levels of stress or by severe depression, research suggests that the Hippocampus can shrink by 10% in people with a diagnosis of severe depression.

Another area of the brain affected by cannabis use is the Limbic System. This system is responsible for controlling emotions, feelings and moods - 'the experience is translated into expression'. When cannabis is used, the Limbic System will struggle to process the experience and mood swings will become evident; laughing and giggling one minute, followed by extreme paranoia the next.

During cannabis use, the Cerebellum (responsible for balance & coordination) and the Basal Ganglia (responsible for controlling movement) are also affected making the user both clumsy and accident-prone.

Have you ever experienced any of these previously discussed points relating to brain function impairment during cannabis use?

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Cannabis use also affects neurotransmitters (chemicals in the brain that send messages). When these neurotransmitters are 'influenced' by THC they can affect the user's motivation levels (users feel lazy and will often procrastinate), sleep and appetite (both essential to the recovery process). THC will also affect the Central Nervous System (CNS); an increase in the heart rate (lead to a feeling of anxiety), dilation of blood vessels (red eye), lowering of blood sugars (munchies).

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