



Short-Term Health Effects of Cannabis

So, you just used some weed – what happens to your body? All users are different, but the below is to be expected:

Right Away

As THC enters your brain and binds to cannabinoid receptors, neurons trigger the release of pleasure chemicals, such as dopamine, granting a feeling of happiness and reward. Intense amounts of these chemicals lead to feelings of euphoria and the high associated with being stoned.

For some users, a sudden high can lead to feelings of panic.

At Peak High

At the top of your dopamine binge, you'll likely experience physical and mental relaxation, the ability to focus intensely on a subject of interest, altered sensory experiences, altered thinking and perception which can be pleasurable or distressing, depending on you and the context. Some users experience paranoia.

Depending on method of ingestion, peak high can come quick or slow.

As you come down...

Euphoria fades as the brain recalls excess dopamine. Over time, your body enters a depressed and sedated state, with less dopamine available than before you used. Users may feel sad or anxious, or simply 'braindead,' may struggle to think and move about, and may eventually pass out depending on how much was used.

"The munchies" leads some users to eat much more than usual.

Passing out is NOT the equivalent of falling asleep. REM sleep is significantly impaired, leading users to be much less rested in the AM.



In the morning...

Weed hangovers, while initially minor, worsen over time as users consume more cannabis. While the high is long over, depressant effects linger, leaving users for about the next 24 hours feeling lethargic, down, slow to think and move, struggle with memory and concentration, low motivation, difficulty learning, and a general struggle to think clearly and engage with the world.

Long-Term Health Effects of Cannabis

Ok, so what happens if I keep using more routinely?

At first...

As your body accustoms to processing THC regularly, tolerance increases, which can lead a person to use more over time to achieve the same effects, and to lose track of how significantly impaired they have become when and after using. Highs are shorter and less satisfying, while hangovers are more pronounced.

Changes in the body's natural production of neurotransmitters (dopamine) lead users to feel increasingly down, stressed & anxious when sober. Struggles with memory, learning, and clear thinking take root and become the status quo even when sober. Sober sleep becomes more difficult if users use before bed.

Tolerance and the need to 'relax' driven by sober stressors push users down a path towards dependency, using cannabis just to 'feel normal.'

...And Eventually

Chronic cannabis use can lead to a series of, while rarely lethal, rather debilitating effects, including depression & anxiety, changes in weight and appetite, isolation, loss of relationships & jobs, insomnia & severe irritability, difficulty focusing & learning, sexual dysfunction, general fatigue, lack of self-care, financial harm, loss of enjoyment for sober life, loss of motivation. Users under age 25 suffer permanent damage to the development of brain grey matter. Lower academic outcomes and achievement. IQ drops. Possible emergence of psychotic illness.