



Reflect and discuss

Harm reduction tips for cannabis users



Hey, did you know...?

Joints are safer to use than water bonging. Water absorbs THC. With a bong, you filter out more THC than tar. You have to puff harder, which means you inhale more tar than you do with joints.

And some bonging and pipes are toxic. It's best to avoid bonging with a plastic bottle, rubber hose or aluminum cone. As for pipes, glass, stainless steel and brass are better to use than wood or plastic.

Here are some other things to think about before you use cannabis:

- Think about why you want to use cannabis. Is it going to help you or make things worse? Keep in mind that if you have a pre-existing vulnerability to psychosis, cannabis use may increase your risk of an episode. It can also worsen the symptoms of psychotic disorders.
- Choose your source with care. Legal cannabis products are tested for quality and are safer to use than cannabis you may get from your dealer or a friend. Avoid using cannabis if you notice any mold or mildew.
- Try a small amount first. Some cultivars (strains) of cannabis may have higher THC content and a stronger effect than you were expecting. If you know it's a stronger cultivar, use less, or choose ones with a lower Total THC.

When using cannabis, there are many things you can do to prevent or reduce harm.

Be wise. Since legalization, there are more ways than ever to get caught up in the legal system. You must be legal age or over to purchase, possess or use cannabis or cannabis products. You can possess up to 30 grams of cannabis for your own use. Be sure you know where and when it is safe to use, especially if you're underage.

Avoid cannabis smoke if you can. Cannabis smoke contains tar and toxins. It's safest to use a vaporizer because it delivers the THC in mist form instead of smoke. The second best choice is to smoke cannabis in joint form or consume edibles.

If smoking cannabis, avoid deep inhalations. About 95% of the THC in the smoke is absorbed in the first few seconds. You don't need to puff hard or hold your breath. To prevent burns, use a small piece of rolled unbleached cardboard as a filter.



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If you're eating or drinking cannabis, take your time. It can be hard to find the right dose when eating or drinking cannabis products. You can get much higher for much longer than you planned. Use a small amount and wait at least one hour. Feel the effects first before using more.

Stick to one substance. Drinking alcohol while using cannabis can produce effects that are unwanted or last longer than expected. The same is true for other drugs including prescription medications. Some people smoke cannabis with tobacco, but it's safer to consume cannabis alone. Tobacco has many cancer-causing toxins.

Steer clear of the wheel. Cannabis impairs your motor coordination and judgment. It also affects other skills related to safe driving. Wait six hours after using cannabis before driving or operating machinery.

Adapted from **Safer Cannabis Use** <https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/infosheet/safer-cannabis-use-marijuana-hash-hash-oil>

Activity steps

1. Watch the [Harm reduction tips video](#).
2. Walk through the contents of the handout.
3. Working in pairs or small teams, make a visual and/or audio recording of some or all of the harm reduction material featured in the video and handout.

Get creative!

Create your own harm reduction script to record and share with others.