

## Risks without panic

**While it is working.** Memory, attention and motor control work less well. According to reviews, the risk of a road accident rises to 1.25 to 2.66 times, and even more with alcohol. Restlessness, anxiety, panic and confusion are more common with little experience and a lot of THC. The pulse rises. Studies point to a higher risk of heart attack in the first hour, especially with pre-existing conditions; the data are limited.

**With frequent use over a longer period.**

- Dependence: about one in eleven people who have ever used cannabis develops a cannabis use disorder. From weekly use onwards, the risk rises markedly.
- Psychosis: the risk rises with the intensity of use, compared with people who do not use, to 1.4 to 2 times with occasional use and 2 to 3.4 times with intensive use. Vulnerable people are particularly at risk, and a lot of THC is particularly risky.
- Airways: people who smoke cough more often and more often have chronic bronchitis. Tobacco does additional harm.
- Memory: regular use makes it worse; after stopping, the impairments largely recede.
- Anxiety and depression: slightly higher risk; whether cannabis is the cause is unclear.
- Synthetic cannabinoids, which can be mixed into products of unknown origin, have hardly predictable effects; there have been deaths.

**Reducing the risks.** The safest choice is not to use cannabis. People who do use it can reduce the risks considerably. The international guidelines for lower-risk use, which the BIÖG recommends to adults, say: start late or not at all, less THC, do not smoke and no tobacco, be careful with edibles, rarely rather than daily, take breaks, know where it comes from, do not mix, do not drive. It is riskiest when several things come together, such as starting early, frequent use and a lot of THC.

### Key points

- Frequency, amount and THC content determine the risk.
- Psychosis in the family: do without.
- If you find it hard to stick to these points: take the self-test or seek advice.

Sources: Federal Ministry of Health (2017), summary report "Cannabis: potential and risks" (CaPRis); National Academies of Sciences (2017), The Health Effects of Cannabis and Cannabinoids; Fischer et al. (2022), Lower-Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines, International Journal of Drug Policy 99.

More detail: [csc.do/en/prevention/knowledge/risks-without-panic/](https://csc.do/en/prevention/knowledge/risks-without-panic/) ·

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