

## Substance Use, Abuse and Dependence

### Classification and Information on Substances

#### Cannabis (Dagga)

<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	Cannabis sativa is a hardy, aromatic herbaceous plant that contains at least 400 different chemicals, of which its main mind-altering ingredient is THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol). The cannabis plant is usually cut, dried, chopped, and rolled into a joint or blunt (resembling a cigarette/cigar).
<b>MODE OF ADMINISTRATION</b>	Cannabis is generally inhaled by smoking it. It is sometimes smoked with Mandrax. It is less frequently ingested orally (e.g., dagga cookies).
<b>PRIMARY EFFECT</b>	Central nervous system depressant and hallucinogen.
<b>SHORT-TERM EFFECTS</b>	<p>The effects from smoking are generally experienced within a few minutes and appear to peak in 10 to 30 minutes and wear off in 2 or 3 hours. The following effects are usually present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dry mouth and throat;</li> <li>• Increased heart rate;</li> <li>• Red eyes;</li> <li>• Distorted perceptual and sensory processes;</li> <li>• Impaired co-ordination and balance;</li> <li>• Delayed reaction time;</li> <li>• Loss of concentration and diminished short-term memory;</li> <li>• Impaired judgement;</li> <li>• Loss of motivation and diminished inhibitions;</li> <li>• Increase in appetite (“the munchies”);</li> <li>• Moderate doses tend to induce a sense of well-being and a dreamy state of relaxation that encourages fantasies and heightened suggestibility;</li> <li>• In large doses, intense and disturbing reactions including paranoia, hallucinations and psychosis.</li> </ul>
<b>LONG-TERM EFFECTS</b>	<p>Heavy and continued use can lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subtle loss of intellectual capacity (including deficits to attention, learning and memory capacity);</li> <li>• Chronic respiratory illness (including chest colds, bronchitis, emphysema and bronchial asthma);</li> <li>• Damage to respiratory, reproductive and immune systems;</li> <li>• Psychiatric complications (including depression, anxiety, panic attacks, paranoid ideation, hallucinations and psychosis);</li> <li>• Increased risk of lung cancer, chromosomal damage, seizures, and immune system impairment;</li> <li>• Risk of injury.</li> </ul>
<b>ADDICTION POTENTIAL</b>	High psychological addiction potential.
<b>TREATMENT OPTIONS</b>	In cases of heavy and prolonged use, inpatient and/or outpatient treatment with the use of multiple therapeutic methods (individual, family and group psychotherapy) is usually necessary to achieve lasting abstinence. Co-morbid conditions are treated if required.