Okay, so cannabis gets you high. It helps you to relax and unwind and can make you feel good...
...but are you in control of your cannabis use? Or is it controlling you?

You can become dependent on cannabis, just like you can with other drugs. Your dependency might be more psychological than physical – but it can still cause problems in your life.

This guide is for heavy cannabis users. It helps you understand what cannabis might be doing to you, both mentally and physically, and what steps you can take if you want to cut back or quit. It explains the risks and the law, and points the way to further help and information.

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For more info and confidential advice you can call **FRANK on 0800 77 66 00** or go to talktofrank.com
ups and downs

You probably have lots of reasons for using cannabis:

> to get high
> to relax
> to chill out with your mates and have a laugh
> because you enjoy it

but have you experienced any of the downs?

In the short term, cannabis can:

> make you feel sick
> aggravate asthma
> make you feel paranoid or edgy
> put a strain on the heart
> lead to confusion and hallucinations

Did you know?

Cannabis contains at least as many cancer-causing chemicals as tobacco.

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But the biggest risks from cannabis are associated with regular, long-term use. These include:

**Physical health problems**
- lower heart rate and blood pressure
- increased risk of throat and lung diseases like bronchitis and cancer
- nicotine addiction if you smoke cannabis in joints
- lower fertility, so it can be harder to have children

**Mental health problems**
- psychological addiction, up to 10% of users become dependent on cannabis
- forgetfulness
- depression
- anxiety and paranoia
- risk of psychotic symptoms
- contributing to the risk of schizophrenia
- If you have mental health problems, you may be more likely to relapse and cannabis can stop your medication from working

**Social problems**
- debt and money troubles
- losing interest in partners, friends and leisure activities

**Work problems**
- doing badly at college or work because you can't concentrate
- losing your motivation, so you give up or drop out
me? a cannabis habit?

If any of the following sound familiar, it could mean that your cannabis use is becoming more than a bit of fun in your spare time.

- do you often find yourself thinking about your next joint?
- are you using larger amounts than before or doing it more often?
- do you try to give up, but then get back on it again?
- are you losing interest in other activities?
- are all your friends using cannabis too?
- do you need more and more to get the same hit?
- do you get edgy when you run out of stash or your supplies are low?

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If you have experienced one or more of these symptoms it doesn’t necessarily mean you are dependent.

But if you are concerned about it, the next section has information on how to cut down or stop altogether.

To find out more about your cannabis use and how it’s affecting your life, try the five-minute online self-assessment quiz at www.knowcannabis.org.