"Cannabis can't be harmful because it comes from a plant so it's natural."

"It's no big deal. Most people use cannabis these days."

"It's OK to smoke cannabis in the street now 'cos it's legal."

"Smoking cannabis puts you on a slippery slope to using harder drugs."

Some people seem to think they know a lot about cannabis...
...but how can you tell the facts from the fiction?

**FACT:** Cannabis can cause health problems both physical and mental, including things like anxiety and paranoia. Just because it's from a plant doesn't mean it's harmless.

**FACT:** Cannabis is illegal. It's a Class C drug and you can get up to two years in prison for possessing it and 14 years for supplying it.

**FACT:** After alcohol and tobacco, cannabis is the most commonly used drug in the UK. But most people DON'T use it. Just one in ten adults say they have used cannabis in the past year.

**FACT:** A small number of people who use cannabis go on to use other drugs. But most people do not.

---

Want to know more? Use this leaflet to find out about:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>cannabis: the basics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>what it does</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>cannabis and mental health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>spotting the signs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>cannabis and the law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>help and advice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And don't forget, for friendly, confidential advice and information, you can call FRANK on 0800 77 66 00 24 hours a day. Calls are free from landlines and some mobiles. There's also a textphone for the hard of hearing on 0800 917 8765. Or go to talktofrank.com
**cannabis: the basics**

*Cannabis* is a naturally occurring *drug* made from parts of the cannabis plant. Cannabis plants grow in a variety of climates and can reach up to 15 feet tall.

*Cannabis isn't new.* It's been used throughout history for medicinal and social purposes. The Chinese first recorded the properties of cannabis in texts dating back to 2,700 BC.

The cannabis plant contains tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) as its main active ingredient. Different forms of cannabis contain different amounts of THC. The higher the amount, the stronger the effects will be.

*People use cannabis to relax and chill out.* Most people mix it with tobacco and smoke it like a cigarette in a 'joint'. Some people put it in a pipe or 'bong' and smoke it that way. Others make tea with it or bake it in 'hash cakes' or cookies.
Some people use the cannabis plant to help with medical conditions such as multiple sclerosis and arthritis. It is still illegal to possess, but the medicinal use of cannabis continues to be researched.

Smoking cannabis carries the same risks as smoking tobacco, such as cancer and lung disease, and may be even more harmful, particularly if used with tobacco.

It has also been linked with mental health problems, including schizophrenia and hallucinations.

"My mum found out I was smoking joints and she went ballistic. She was worried that I'd become a druggie and start taking other stuff. She completely blew it all out of proportion. I'll have a spliff every now and then, but it doesn't control my life. There's no way I'd get into stuff like coke or heroin."

Kelly, 17

See pages 4 – 5 for the lowdown on the different types of cannabis.
what does it look like?

Cannabis comes in different forms and strengths:

**Cannabis resin** (hash or hashish) is a brown/black substance that is scraped from the cannabis plant and pressed into lumps.

**Herbal cannabis** (marijuana, grass or weed) is the dried leaves of the cannabis plant. It looks like tightly packed dried garden herbs.

**Cannabis oil** is the least common. It is dark and sticky and often comes in a small jar.
Did you know?

The amount of THC in sinsemilla and skunk has more than doubled in the last ten years - it's now around .14% compared to 6% in 1995. In the same time, average levels of THC in grass and hash haven't changed much. But it's not just THC that affects the strength of cannabis. You can get strong herbal cannabis and weak skunk and you can't predict their effects.

(TCH contents sourced from Young People and Cannabis, Healthwise 2004)

**Sinsemilla**

is less common than grass but much stronger. It is a bud grown in the absence of male plants and has no seeds. Most of it is cultivated artificially. The THC content in sinsemilla is on average two to three times higher than in hash or weed.

**Skunk**

is a form of cannabis that was originally named for its strong smell. It can be a lot stronger than other varieties.

Cannabis goes by a variety of terms including:

- bhang
- black
- blast
- blow
- blunts
- Bob Hope
- bush
- dope
- draw
- ganja
- gear
- grass
- hash
- hashish
- hemp
- herb
- marijuana
- pot
- puff
- Northern Lights
- resin
- sensi
- sinsemilla
- shit
- skunk
- smoke
- soap
- spliff
- wackybacky
- weed