



Cannabis

Public Health Considerations

Town of Cobourg

Presentation Dec 17, 2018



Cannabis Legalization

- In April 2017, the Canadian government introduced the Cannabis Act (a component of Bill C-45), with the intent to legalize, regulate, and restrict access to cannabis as of 2018.
- Non-medical cannabis consumption became legal on Oct 17, 2018.
- In Ontario, those 19 years of age and older are able to legally purchase, possess, consume and grow non-medical cannabis.



What is Cannabis?

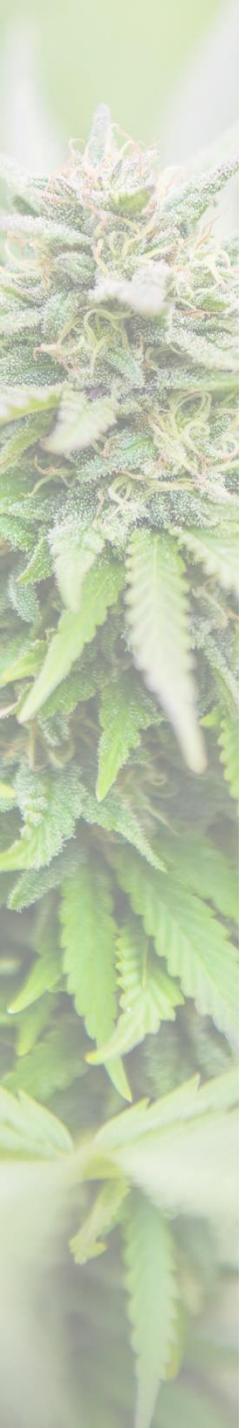
- Cannabis is a product from the cannabis sativa plant, native to tropical and temperate climates, but cultivated around the world.
- It is consumed for psychoactive and therapeutic effects.
- It comes in many forms, including dried flowers and leaves; hash; extracts, such as oils; and edibles.

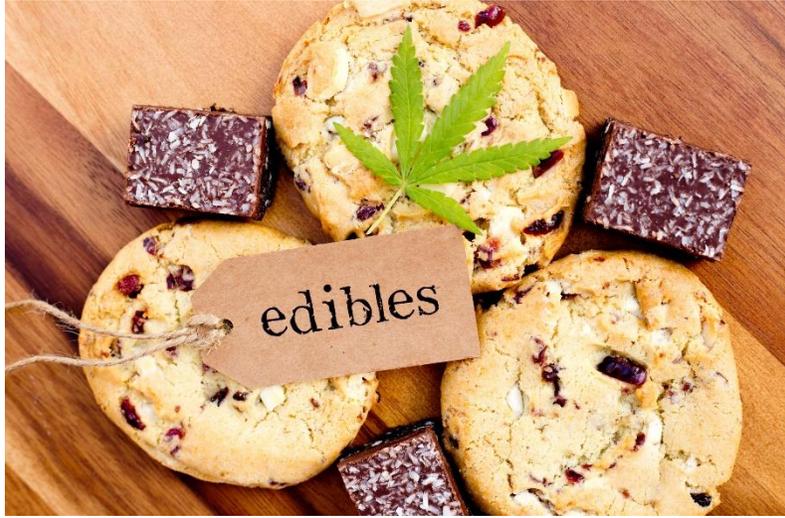
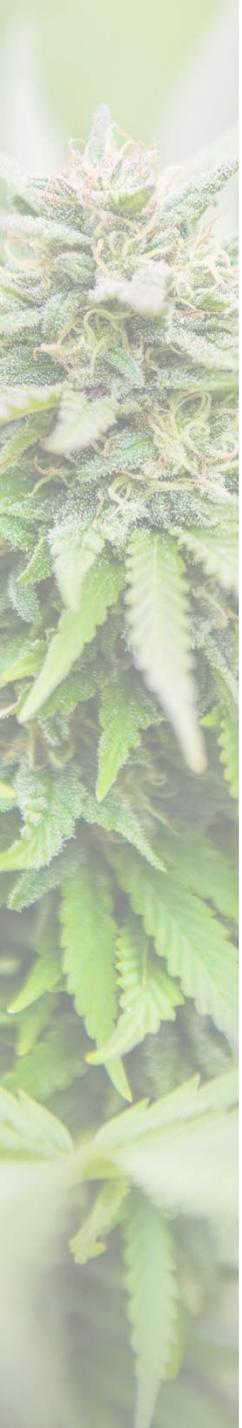


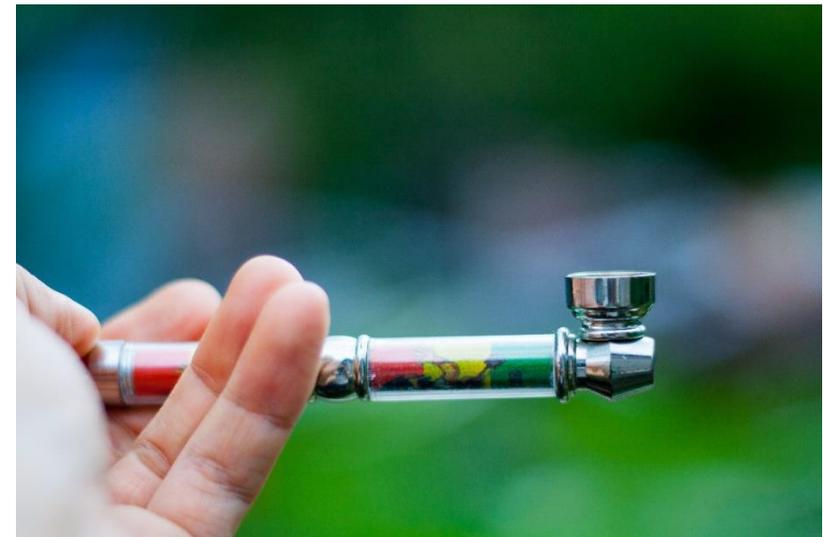
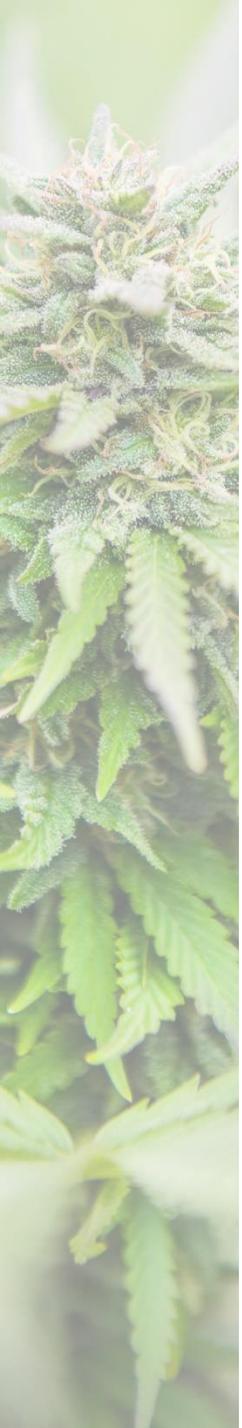
How is Cannabis Consumed?

Cannabis can be consumed in many different ways including:

- Rolled into a cigarette, packed in a pipe or bong and then smoked
- Vapourized
- The extracts are used in oil rig pipes or taken orally
- Used as an ingredient in food.

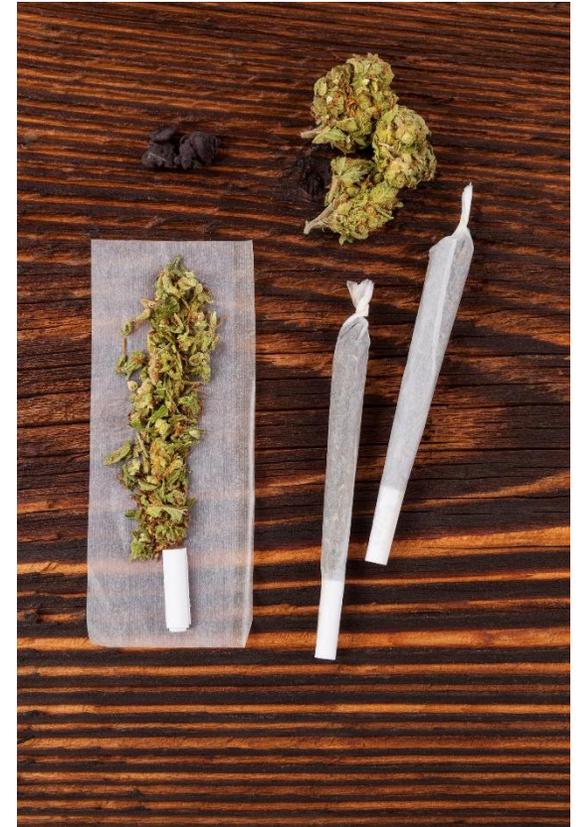


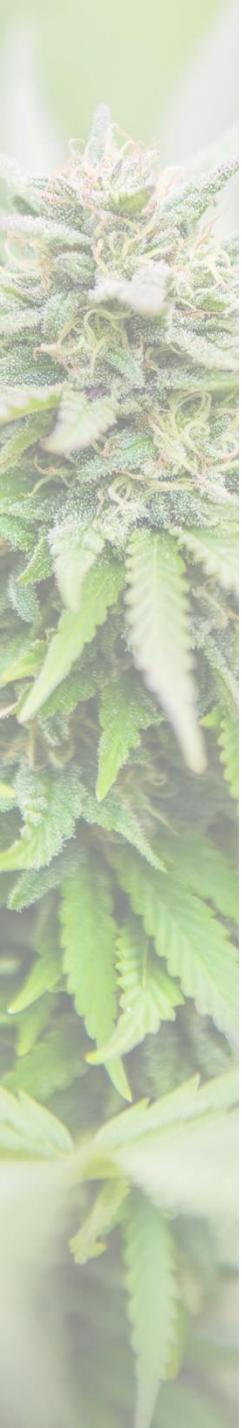




Who Uses Cannabis?

- According to the Canadian Tobacco, Alcohol and Drug Survey (2015), cannabis was the most prevalently used illicit drug.
- The prevalence of past-year cannabis use was 12% (or 3.6 million), an increase compared to 2013 (11% or 3.1 million).



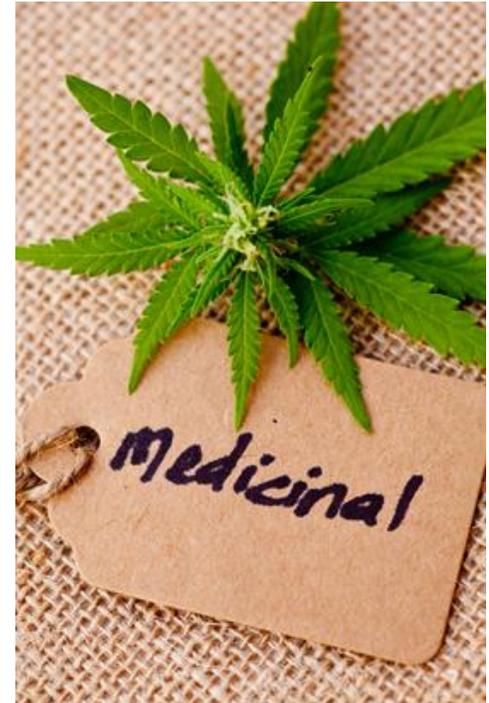


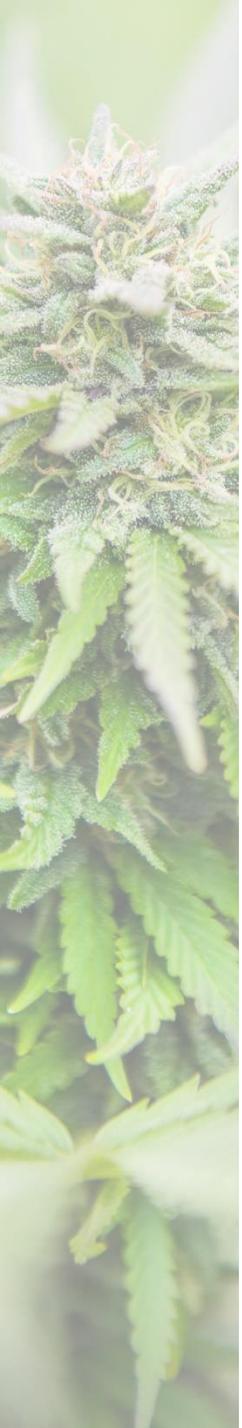
Who Uses Cannabis?

- Canadian young adults aged 18 to 25 have disproportionately higher rates of cannabis consumption compared to the rest of the population.
- The majority (72% or 2.6 million) of past-year cannabis users reported using cannabis in the past 3 months and many of those reported consuming cannabis on a daily or almost daily basis (33% or 840,000).

Who Uses Cannabis?

- Among past-year cannabis users, 24% (or 831,000) reported using it for medical purposes.





Who Uses Cannabis?

According to the Canadian Community Health Survey (2013-14), the age-standardized self-reported prevalence of those who have ever used cannabis for the HKPR District Health Unit area is 50.1%, which is significantly higher than the Ontario rate of 40.1%.

What are the Effects of Cannabis?

The effects are dependent on:

- How cannabis is consumed
- How often and how long it has been consumed
- Mood, expectations and environment
- Age
- Pre-existing medical or psychiatric conditions
- Whether any alcohol or other drugs have been taken (illegal, prescription, over-the-counter or herbal)

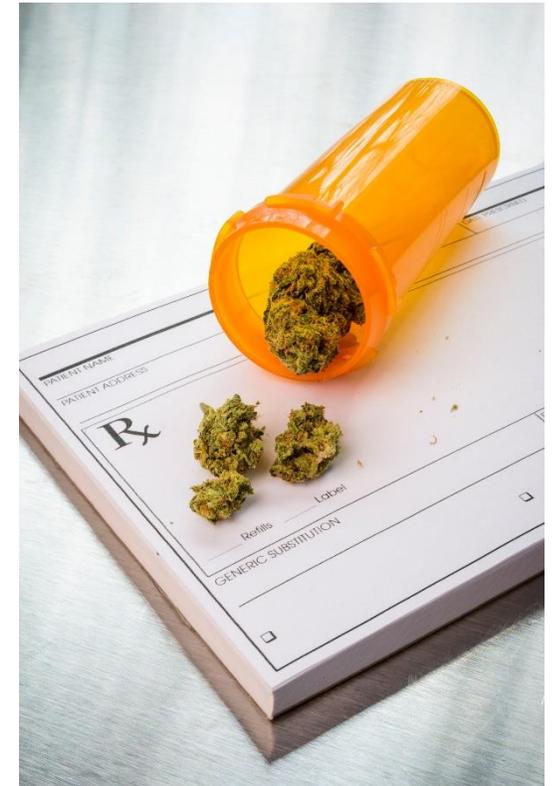
What are the Effects of Cannabis?

- Experiences differ between individuals, as well as between substance-taking episodes for the same individual, ranging from relaxed, lively, talkative, giggly and euphoric, to tense, anxious, fearful and confused.

What are the Effects of Cannabis?

Therapeutic uses of cannabis are associated with its ability to regulate and manage:

- Nausea
- Appetite
- Pain
- Depressed mood and insomnia

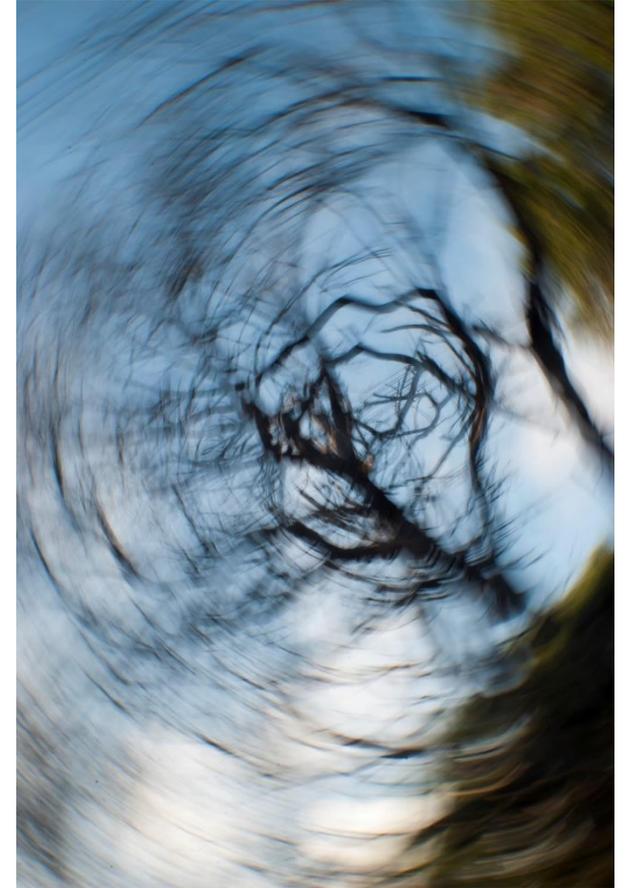


Health Harms Related to Use



Heavy or regular use may lead to the following health risks:

- Problems with thinking memory or physical co-ordination
- Impairment, which may lead to serious injury including those from motor vehicle collisions
- Hallucinations, such as seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling or feeling things that do not really exist



Health Harms Related to Use



- Mental health problems, specifically for people who have or have an immediate family member who has had a mental health issue
- Cannabis dependence
- Breathing or lung problems from smoking
- Cancer from smoking
- Problems during pregnancy, especially if cannabis is smoked

Health Harms Related to Use



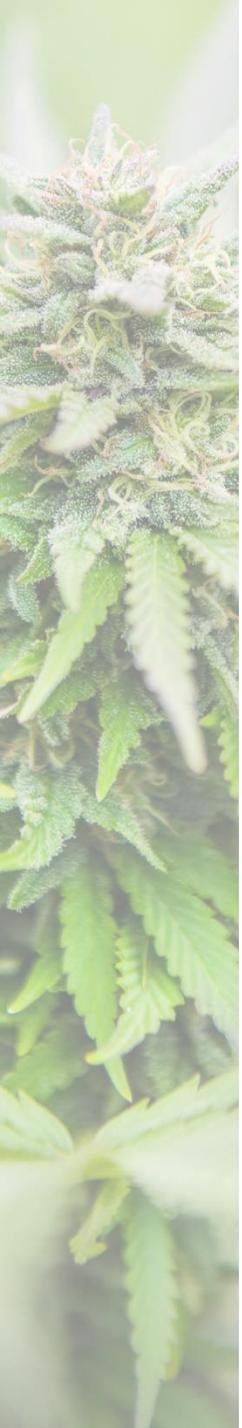
- Regular cannabis users can develop psychological dependence, as well as physical dependence, and those who stop using may experience withdrawal symptoms including irritability, anxiety, upset stomach, loss of appetite, sweating and disturbed sleep. Symptoms generally last for a week, except sleep problems which may persist longer.

Health Harms Related to Use



- Youth and young adults, under the age of 25, are particularly vulnerable to the risks associated with cannabis use.





Public Health Concerns Related to Cannabis?

- Risk of toxicity
- Unintended exposure to children
- Motor vehicle accidents
- Lung cancer
- Substance use disorders
- Occupational safety risks
- Negative mental health outcomes
- Respiratory health impacts
- Impaired child and youth development
- Equity implications considering different usage rates across gender and income levels



Public Health Strategies to Address Cannabis Concerns

- Health promotion
- Health protection
- Prevention and harm reduction
- Population health assessment
- Disease, injury and disability surveillance
- Evidence-based programming
- Apply principles of social justice, attention to human rights and equity, evidence-informed policy and practice, and addressing the underlying determinants of health

Canada's Lower-Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines (LRCUG)



Recommendations

- Cannabis use has health risks best avoided by abstaining
- Delay taking up cannabis use until later in life
- Identify and choose lower-risk cannabis products
- Don't use synthetic cannabinoids
- Avoid smoking burnt cannabis—choose safer ways of using
- If you smoke cannabis, avoid harmful smoking practices
- Limit and reduce how often you use cannabis
- Don't use and drive, or operate other machinery
- Avoid cannabis use altogether if you are at risk for mental health problems or are pregnant
- Avoid combining these risks

The LRCUG are an evidence-based intervention project by the Canadian Research Initiative in Substance Misuse (CRISM).



CANADIAN RESEARCH
INITIATIVE IN
SUBSTANCE MISUSE

INITIATIVE CANADIENNE
DE RECHERCHE
EN ABUS DE SUBSTANCE

Reference: *American Journal of Public Health*, 2017

The LRCUG have been endorsed by the following organizations:

ASSOCIATION
MÉDICALE
CANADIENNE



CANADIAN
MEDICAL
ASSOCIATION



CPHA ACSP



Canadian Society of Addiction Medicine
La Société Médicale Canadienne sur l'Addiction



Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
Centre de toxicomanie et de santé mentale



Canadian Centre
on Substance Use
and Addiction

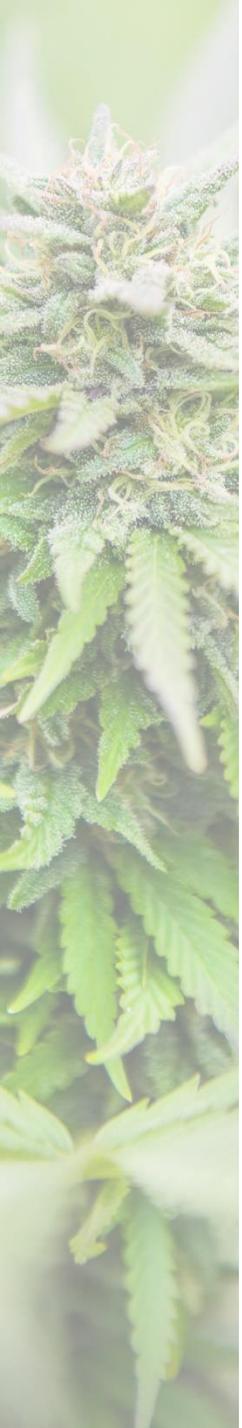
Centre canadien sur
les dépendances et
l'usage de substances

Envision. Engage. Impact. *Envision, Engage. Impact.*

Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health (in principle)

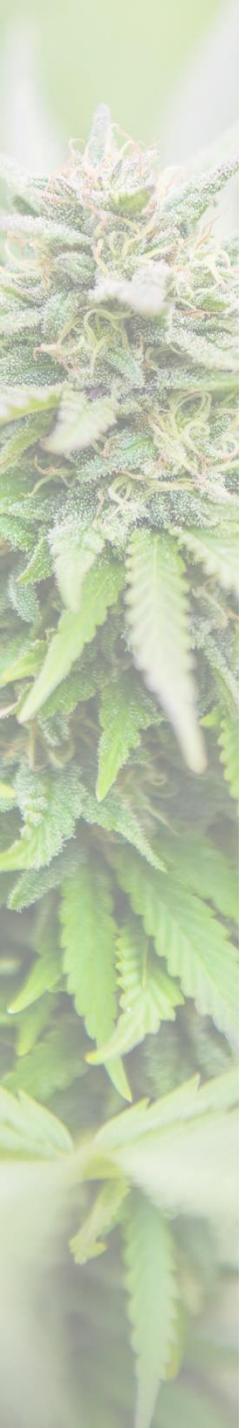
What HKPR District Health Unit is Doing

- Awareness and education
- Collaboration and partnerships
- Support to municipalities and schools
- Keeping current on research and legislation
- Participation on regional/provincial committees and initiatives
- Programming: Weed Out the Risk, Challenges, Beliefs and Changes
- Smoke Free Ontario Act enforcement
- Monitor and report on local data



Suggestion for Municipalities

- Consider using a public health lens and harm reduction approach to decisions regarding cannabis
- Compile information on pros and cons for opt-out/opt-in decision
- Seek public input on decision
- If opting in, prepare a Municipal Cannabis Policy Statement that addresses all local concerns
- Review existing by-laws looking for areas that could be strengthened
- Stay in contact with public health as you move forward



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References

- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. (2018). *Cannabis*. Available online at: <https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-illness-and-addiction-index/cannabis>
- Ontario Public health Association. (2016) *The Public Health Implications of the Legalization of Recreational Cannabis*. Available online at: http://www.opha.on.ca/getmedia/67c3c2f1-2c69-4f0a-963c-2e520e9b38a7/The-Public-Health-Implications-of-the-Legalization-of-Recreational-Cannabis_1.pdf.aspx?ext=.pdf