

people at risk of developing problems with their cannabis use

Not everyone develops problems when using cannabis, but those who do can experience side effects ranging from panic and anxiety when intoxicated, through to developing a dependency on cannabis after using the drug regularly over a period of time.

Although some people are more at risk of developing problems than others, these symptoms can and do arise at any stage of cannabis use.

people with a mental health problem

There is much debate over whether cannabis itself causes mental health problems. For some people, there are very strong associations between the use of cannabis and either developing some mental health symptoms or making a condition they may already have worse.

Cannabis use has been linked to the following mental health conditions:

- depression and anxiety
- psychotic episodes
- schizophrenia

People already diagnosed with or experiencing symptoms related to any of these conditions should avoid using cannabis. If they do use the drug, they should talk to their doctor or healthcare worker about their cannabis use. This also applies to anyone who uses cannabis and has a family history of mental illness.

For more information, see the factsheet [cannabis and mental health](#)

young people

Generally speaking, if a person starts smoking cannabis at an early age (i.e., early adolescence) and uses cannabis frequently, they are more likely to experience negative consequences.

Young people using cannabis are at greater risk of:

- developing mental health problems
- becoming dependent on cannabis
- general life problems
- relationship and home conflicts
- moving out of home at an early age
- difficulty with memory and learning
- dropping out of study or work and not going on to complete further education
- financial difficulties
- legal issues

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Factsheet 15

The following factors may increase the risk of developing problems with cannabis use:

- frequent use at a young age
- emotional stress
- poor parenting
- school drop-out
- affiliation with drug-using peers
- moving out of home at an early age
- daily cigarette smoking
- having ready access to cannabis
- having perceived positive experiences of early cannabis use

For more information please see the factsheet [‘cannabis and young people’](#).