

THE HIGH—WAY CODE

THE GUIDE TO SAFER, MORE ENJOYABLE DRUG USE

(CANNABIS)



GLOBAL DRUG SURVEY

INTRODUCING THE GDS HIGH-WAY CODE

GDS knows pleasure drives drug use, not the avoidance of harm. As far as we know no guide has ever outlined the impact of harm reduction strategies on the pleasure users obtain from drugs... until now...



GLOBAL DRUG SURVEY

Ours is a simple premise: as with driving, there are things you need to know and 'rules' you should observe in order to get you to your destination safely. Being aware of these makes you much more likely to get to your planned destination in one piece and much less likely to cause harm to anyone around you.

Please share these findings, they really are important.



THE HIGH-WAY CODE



WHAT IS IT?

The first guide to safer drug use voted for by people who take drugs.

HOW WAS IT WAS DEVELOPED?

GDS asked loads of people who take drugs, as well as other experts, what strategies they thought would reduce the risk of harm when taking some commonly used drugs. As part of GDS2014, we asked people from around the world who had used those drugs in the last year to vote on these strategies. For each strategy we asked:

1. if they usually (i.e. more than 50% of the time) did it
2. to rate how important it is in reducing the risk of harm (10 being the max reduction of risk)
3. to tell us whether using that strategy increased, decreased or had no effect on the pleasure they got from the drug.

WHO DEVELOPED IT?

The guys and gals at Global Drug Survey—a nice bunch of smart people who know a bit about drugs and, with people's help everywhere, will continue to learn more and share what they find out.

ANYTHING ELSE?

Yep follow us on twitter @globaldrusurv @drugsmeter, like us on Facebook and check out our free apps the drinks meter (www.drinksmeter.com and the app stores) and the drugs meter (www.drugsmeter.com and google play store).

For more interesting info on drugs check out our drugs meter minutes videos on the Global Drug Survey YouTube channel. For suggestions on how to improve GDS, email: adam@globaldrugsurvey.com

HOW TO READ THE HIGH-WAY CODE

This number indicates the percentage of people who told GDS they usually follow the strategy.

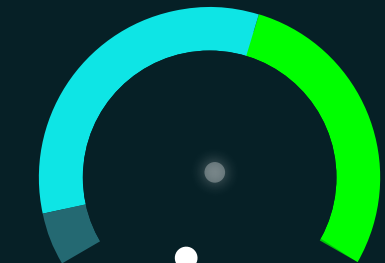
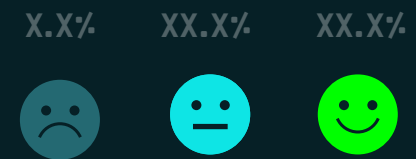


Users who usually do

This dial tells you how important users thought this strategy was in reducing the risk of harm.



Reducing risk from 0–10



Pleasure impact rated by users

Here you can check how many users thought this strategy increased, decreased or didn't affect their pleasure.



KNOW YOUR DRUG EFFECT, THE DOSE, TIME TO ONSET, TIME TO PEAK AND HOW LONG IT LASTS



All drug effects are dose related. Usually the more drugs you take the stronger and longer lasting the effects (and the greater the risk of harm). Because drug purity and potency varies so much you need to treat every new batch as a new drug. This means 'test dosing' each new batch. Knowing how strong your drug is can help you titrate (adjust/measure) how much you take so hopefully you get the effect you want and avoid overdosing. By knowing how long it takes for a drug to come on and how long it lasts, you reduce your risk of taking too much. People also vary widely in how they respond to drugs and how much they need to take. Everyone has to find their own 'right dose'. Not all drugs suit all people so if you get anxious or paranoid on a drug don't use it. Remember being greedy is not good for you. Less is more. Don't ever be worried about calling for an ambulance if you're worried about the state of a mate.


GDS does not condone or promote the use of illegal drugs. GDS does promote the use of common sense when going about one's daily activities. Drugs and alcohol can be very dangerous. They can kill you. Using drugs when you are young can have a lasting negative impact on your cognitive and emotional well-being. The only way to avoid these harms is not to take drugs. This document represents the views of those who responded to the GDS. Please note: no amount of planning and care can ensure you will have either a safe or enjoyable experience when you take drugs. GDS is simply reporting the results of the survey which may provide some guidance in reducing the risk of harm only. The best way to avoid drug related harm is to not use drugs.

CANNABIS

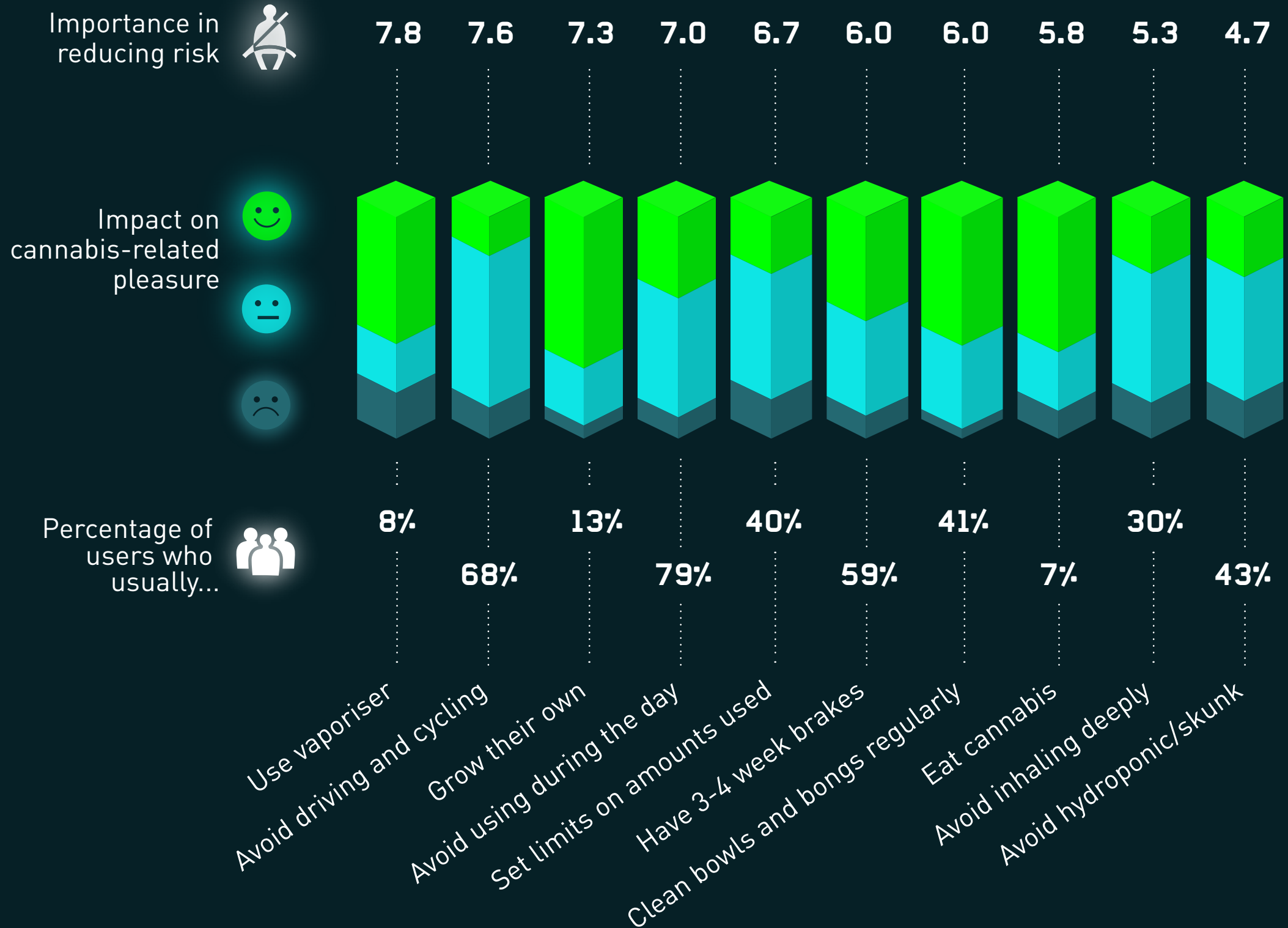
38,000 USERS

There are many forms of cannabis. Regardless of whether you use herbal, oil or resin the things that increase the risks of harm most are smoking and mixing with tobacco. Work done by GDS suggests that most people would prefer a stronger but more balanced weed than the high THC potency forms that seem to dominate the market.

Usual dose	50-250	mg	
Time to onset	2-10	min	<div></div>
Time to peak	20-60	min	<div></div>
Duration of action	2-8	hrs	<div></div>



CANNABIS



1*

DON'T MIX WITH TOBACCO



*as ranked by GDS panel of experts on cannabis and tobacco



1*

DON'T MIX WITH TOBACCO

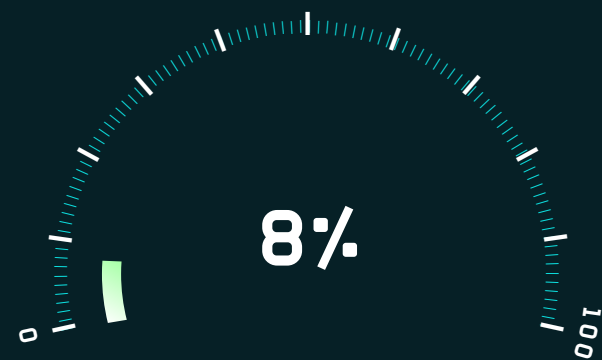
Do not mix tobacco with
your cannabis

Smoking cannabis and tobacco together results in greater health risks than smoking either alone. Both cannabis and tobacco smoke cause respiratory problems and can increase the risk of cancer. Not mixing cannabis with tobacco reduces the risk to your health. Importantly, it also reduces your chances of becoming a regular tobacco smoker.



1

USE VAPORISER

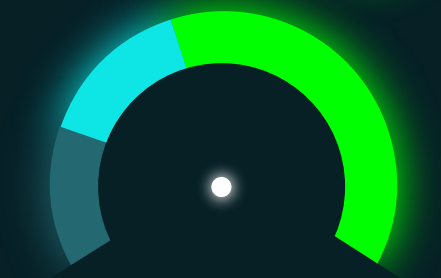
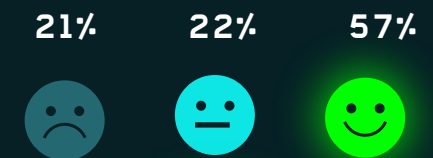


Users who usually do



8.0

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on
cannabis-related
pleasure



1

USE VAPORISER

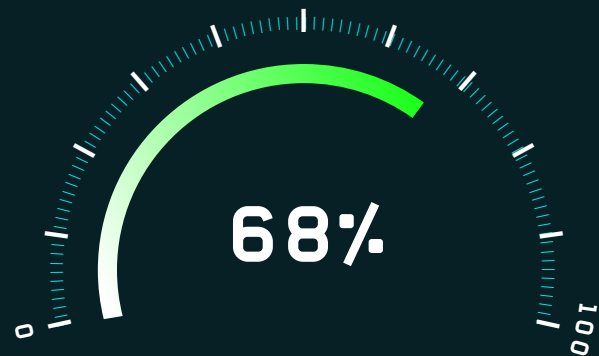
Use a vaporiser instead of smoking

Smoking cannabis is the most dangerous way of using it. Burning cannabis is the thing that releases tar and cancer causing chemicals. Unlike a joint or bong, a vaporiser heats cannabis to below its combustion temperature to produce a vapour. This means that the THC is released but the smoke containing tar and toxins is significantly reduced. Whilst the evidence is not conclusive, it is likely that vaporisers reduce the risk to your lungs. It is also likely that some types of vaporisers are better than others in protecting your health.



2

AVOID DRIVING AND CYCLING



Users who usually do



Importance in reducing risk



Impact on
cannabis-related
pleasure



2

AVOID DRIVING AND CYCLING

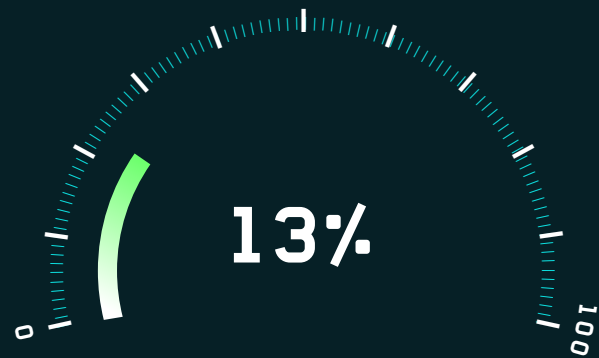
Avoid driving or cycling when you have used cannabis

Cannabis affects perception, concentration, coordination and short-term memory amongst other things. Although many people who drive when they are stoned know they are stoned so drive more slowly, your reaction time and ability to respond to emergency situations is impaired. Research suggests that you're twice as likely to have a fatal road accident when you drive stoned. It's also against the law in most countries. Cycling might not be much safer. Hangover effects can last for 8–12 hours. Walk or take a bus and burn off the 'munchie' calories!



3

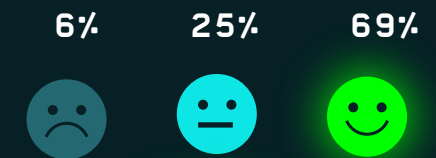
GROW YOUR OWN



Users who usually do



Importance in reducing risk



Impact on
cannabis-related
pleasure



3

GROW YOUR OWN

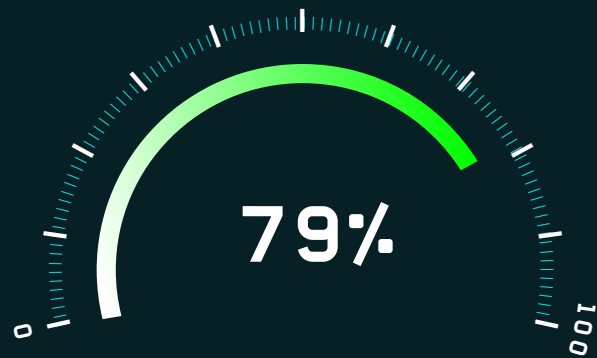
See cannabis that you have grown yourself

Growing your own cannabis means you avoid dealers, you can grow strains that suit your tastes and you know what you are smoking as well as learn a bit about gardening. BUT please remember growing your own cannabis is often against the law so know your local regulations.



4

AVOID USING DURING THE DAY

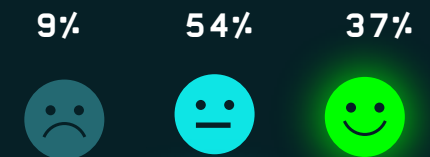


Users who usually do



7.0

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on
cannabis-related
pleasure



4

AVOID USING DURING THE DAY

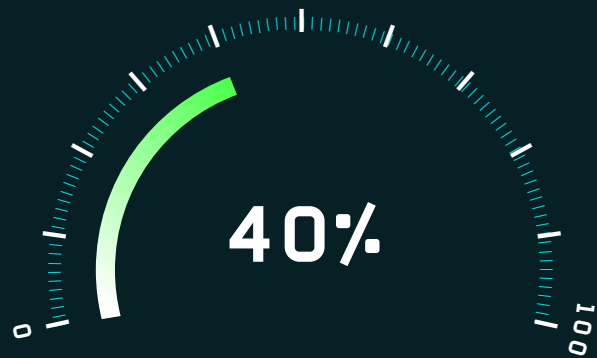
Avoid using cannabis during the day/work hours on a day that you use

The cannabis joint that gets you most stoned is the first one of the day. Using first thing in the morning leads to the development of tolerance throughout the day and increases the risk of dependence. Leave your days free from cannabis—you'll get more stuff done and get stoned on less cannabis in the evenings.



5

SET LIMITS ON AMOUNT USED

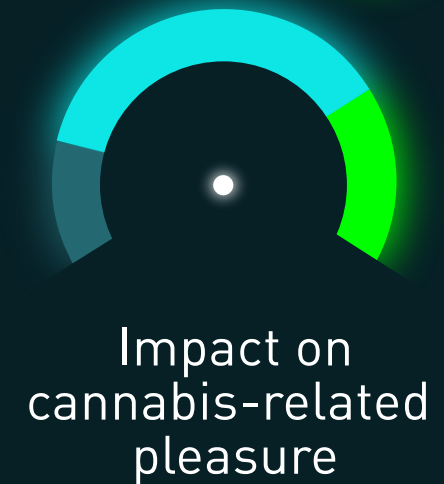
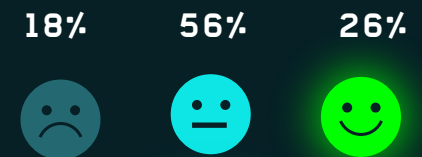


Users who usually do



6.7

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on
cannabis-related
pleasure



5

SET LIMITS ON AMOUNT USED

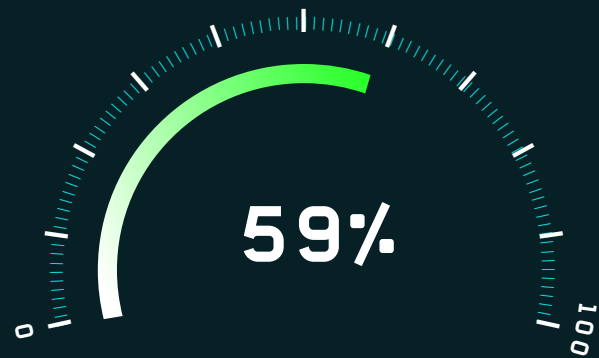
Set limits for how much you will use per day or per week

Since most drug related harms are dose related setting a limit for how much you use might help keep your use under control and reduce your risk of developing tolerance and other cannabis related harms. It also means you might get other stuff done. Don't buy more than you need thinking you will save some for tomorrow—you probably won't. The more you break up the pattern of use the easier it is to control your use of cannabis and reduce the risks.



6

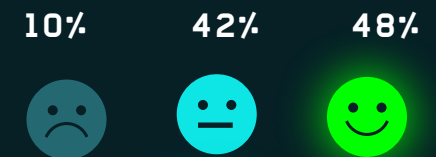
HAVE 3-4 WEEK BREAKS



Users who usually do



Importance in reducing risk



Impact on
cannabis-related
pleasure



6

HAVE 3–4 WEEK BREAKS

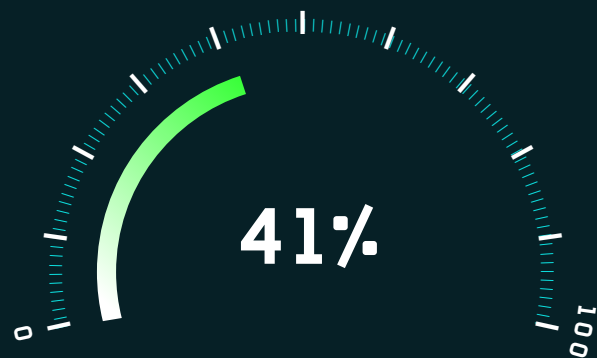
Have breaks from using cannabis of at least 3–4 weeks duration several times during the year

Smoking cannabis every day may cause you problems in different areas of your life and the negative effects can begin to outweigh the reasons you started to smoke cannabis in the first place. Having breaks from cannabis can remind you what you miss and feel if you're stoned all the time. It gives your brain and lungs a break. Your tolerance falls and you get to do loads of things not stoned which might be a good thing (or even necessary) especially if you have exams or loads to sort out in your life. Some people experience unpleasant effects when they use cannabis, such as anxiety, panic attacks or paranoia. Usually these symptoms stop once the cannabis has worn off. If you experience these symptoms more than a couple of times, you should think about not using cannabis. If you have a mental health problem, cannabis can make your condition worse.



7

CLEAN BOWLS AND BONGS REGULARLY

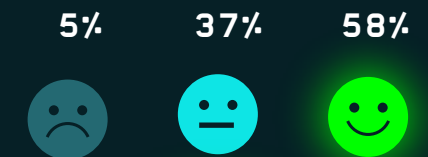


Users who usually do



6.0

Importance in reducing risk



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pleasure



7

CLEAN BOWLS AND BONGS REGULARLY

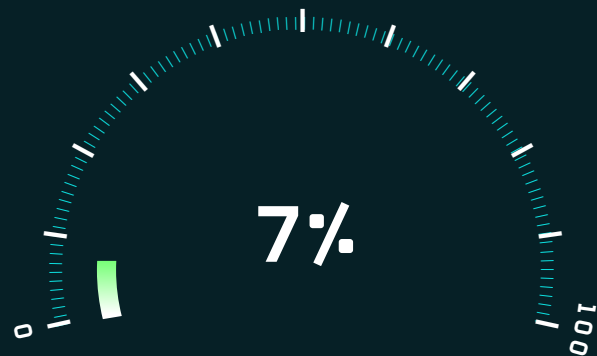
If you use a bong/water pipe make sure you clean out the water and bowl regularly between smoking sessions

Cleaning bongs and pipes and changing bong water will remove tar and other impurities from the surface that you will be breathing smoke through. Germs can hang around in pipes and bongs, which can infect you and your friends. Smoking through water is not a safer way of smoking. The least risky way to smoke cannabis is in a cigarette paper with no tobacco with a small roach (non-printed/matt card) or in a pipe.



8

EAT CANNABIS

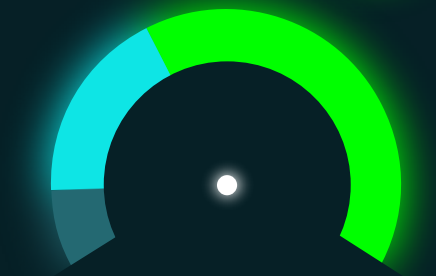
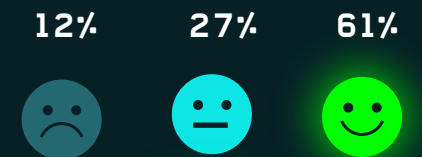


Users who usually do



5.8

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on
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8

EAT CANNABIS

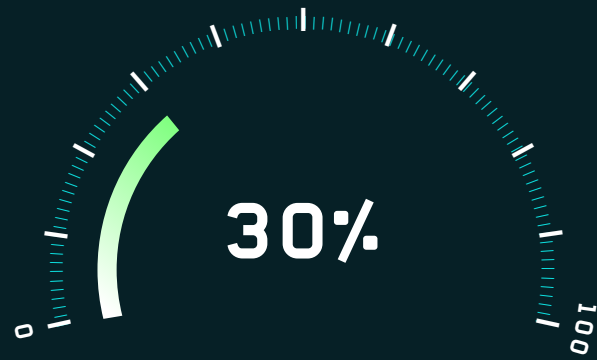
Eat your cannabis (e.g. in baked goods or tea) instead of smoking it

Eating cannabis, either on its own, by cooking it or mixing it with food, or adding it to drinks, avoids damage to your lungs. The effects from eating cannabis last longer (up to 12 hours), can be more intense and are less controllable compared with smoking cannabis. When cannabis is eaten it can take at least an hour or two to feel the effects, so avoid eating more in one session. Be careful. And never give a cannabis cookie to someone without them knowing.



9

AVOID INHALING DEEPLY

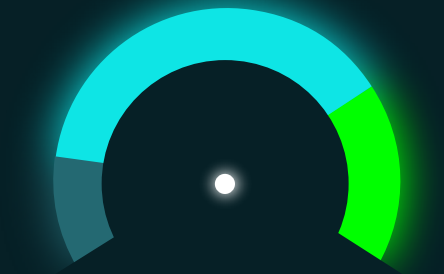


Users who usually do



5.3

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on
cannabis-related
pleasure



9

AVOID INHALING DEEPLY

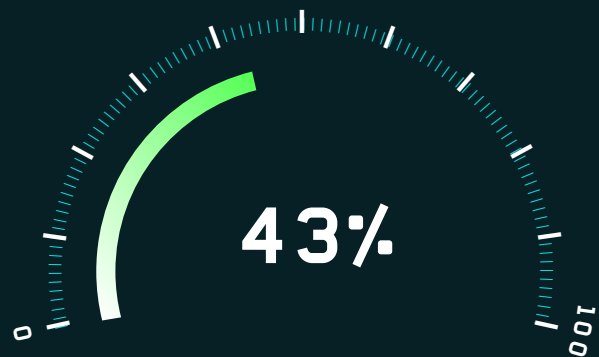
Avoid inhaling deeply and don't hold the smoke inside your lungs for more than a second or two

You don't need to inhale deeply to get stoned. All the 'good stuff' is absorbed in the upper airways in the first second or two. Holding your breath and sucking the smoke deep inside your lungs will just deposit more tar and nasty stuff deep in your lungs for very little extra gain.



10

AVOID HYDROPONIC/SKUNK



Users who usually do



4.7

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on
cannabis-related
pleasure



10

AVOID HYDROPONIC/SKUNK

Smoke outdoor/non-hydro cannabis (or resin/hash) instead of hydroponically grown cannabis (high potency/skunk)

It's tough to say what the safest form of cannabis is. GDS2014 found that users think resin/hashish is the most harmful type of cannabis for your lungs, while earlier work done as part of GDS2012 indicates that high potency weed is the one that causes most paranoia and memory loss. If your cannabis is stronger than usual, try to use less to get the desired effect and to minimize the unpleasant effects. Guess you work this one out for yourself.

