

Cannabis and your mental health

How much do you really know?

1 Cannabis isn't any worse for you just because you've got a mental health problem

True False

2 Using cannabis helps make voices in the head go away

True False

3 You can get dependent on cannabis

True False

4 Using cannabis can worsen the symptoms of mental health problems

True False

5 Using cannabis changes the chemical balance in your brain

True False

6 Using cannabis makes you feel better, not worse

True False

7 Using cannabis affects how well your medication works

True False

8 If you can't stop using cannabis, there's no point just cutting down

True False

Turn over for the answers 

1. False Normally, if you have a mental health problem, cannabis will have more serious side effects for you than it might for some other people.

2. False Cannabis might make voices seem less troublesome for a bit, but they are likely to keep coming back unless the right medication is taken. Cannabis can actually make them worse in the long term.

3. True Some people do get dependent on cannabis so it can be hard for them to stop using it.

4. True If you get anxious, paranoid or depressed, or if you see or hear things, sleep badly or have mood swings, cannabis can make all of these worse.

5. True It's by changing the chemical balance in your brain that cannabis makes you feel relaxed or happy, anxious or paranoid.

6. False It might make you feel more calm or less stressed for a while but it can't provide long-term relief. In fact, rather than helping with your mental health problems, by using cannabis you'll probably make yourself feel bad for longer.

7. True Medication is often aimed at stabilising the chemicals in your brain that affect how you feel. But cannabis can affect those chemicals in all sorts of ways, and can stop your medication working properly. And because you're stoned, you can easily get out of the habit of taking your medication when you need to.

8. False Even if you find it too hard to give up altogether, cutting down your cannabis use and avoiding inhaling large amounts, particularly the strong types of cannabis like 'skunk', will help you.

How did you do?

If you got more than six right...

You've got the facts straight. Now you can make an informed decision about what's best for you. Don't forget to get some help if you think you may need it. Have a look at the leaflet *Cannabis and your mental health* to find out about ways of stopping or getting help.

If you got less than six right...

Before you make up your mind about using cannabis, shouldn't you find out its pros and cons?

Have a look at the leaflet *Cannabis and your mental health* to find out more about how cannabis affects you.