

## How can you get.....

Free drugs?

Alcohol and drugs cannot actually create any effect (or 'buzz') in the brain: all they can do is activate the miraculous "free drugs" that are already in there. Anandamide is one of those free drugs. All cannabis can do is imitate what this free drug does for us. So how can you get a free Anandamide high? Any time you



have ever felt wonderfully relaxed and happy after playing football or dancing or running, you have, actually, been 'stoned' on Anandamide! Any time you have got the giggles after a fright, like watching a horror movie or going on a rollercoaster, you have been 'buzzed' on Anandamide! Combining comedy and exercise (left) can double the dose!

You can get a "free drug buzz" from other things as well. Other powerful neurotransmitters include Adrenaline, Dopamine, Serotonin and the Endorphins. A dose of Adrenaline you get from, for example, playing paintball, is the equivalent to the force of a wrap of Speed! The Serotonin high you get from bonding with your mates is the equivalent of an Ecstasy tablet. The Dopamine released into your brain after you have achieved something you set out to do can be as effective as heroin.



Drugs are a poor imitation of the real thing. To get a real head rush, learn more about neurotransmitters and how to activate them.

Happiness really is all in your head!

### MORE INFORMATION & HELP

For any issue with drugs, call "Talk to Frank" on 0800 77 66 00  
Or: [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

To talk about any problem with a counsellor, call Childline on 0800 11 11

To learn more about the brain, try Neuroscience for kids at:  
[www.faculty.washington.edu/chudler/neurok.html](http://www.faculty.washington.edu/chudler/neurok.html)

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AXL: Alcohol and Drug Education,  
X-treme Challenge, Life Skills

## Cannabis: The real deal



Chronic Puff **Blow** Weed Grass **Ganga**  
Budda **Dope** Loaf Smoke **Spiff** Draw  
Wacky Baccy **Mary Jane** Hash **Bhang**  
**Shit** Skunk **Black** Reefer

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## What is it?

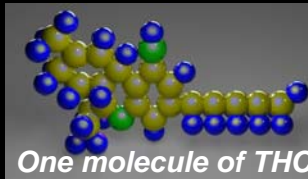
Cannabis comes from a plant called *cannabis sativa*. Once processed, it is usually smoked in 'joints' or 'bongs' or eaten.



## What's in it?

Many people think that cannabis is pure and natural and therefore a 'healthier' option than other drugs. Unfortunately, the way cannabis is usually processed makes it anything but natural. The average joint can contain dozens of added chemicals — even pesticides or petrol .

The main psycho-active ingredient in cannabis (the one that causes the 'stoned' effects) is called delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, for short. The effects will depend on the percentage of THC in the joint. This has been found to vary from 1% to 30%, so it is usually impossible to know what 'dose' of the drug is being ingested.



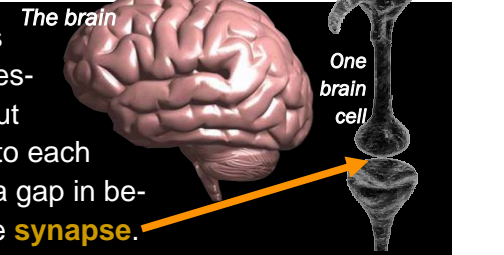
## Is it bad for health?

Because it does not affect the brain stem, cannabis, even in very high doses, cannot kill you. But this does not mean that it is safe for health. Cannabis burns at a very high temperature. Inhaling the smoke deeply can literally char-grill bits of the smoker's lungs and throat. This damage can lead to cancer and respiratory illnesses such as emphysema. In terms of its cancer-causing potential, cannabis is 6 times more dangerous than a cigarette.

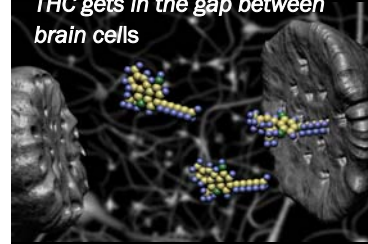
Cannabis affects the way the brain processes information, making learning and remembering more difficult. In a large American study, it was found that students who smoked cannabis got lower grades than those who didn't. People can get addicted to cannabis and can suffer unpleasant withdrawal symptoms if they can't get the drug.

## What does it do in the brain?

The brain is made up of billions of brain cells (or 'neurons') that communicate electrical messages in vast networks called neural nets. But these brain cells are not actually connected to each other. There is a gap in between called the **synapse**.

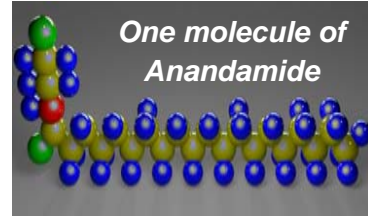


THC gets in the gap between brain cells



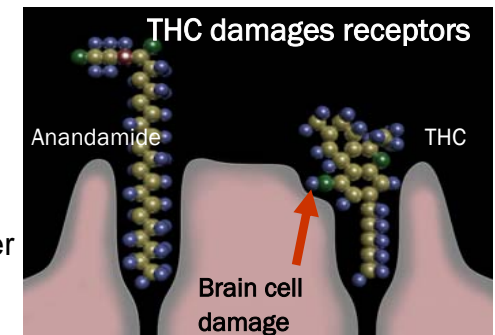
For the message to get through, a chemical called a neurotransmitter has to leap the gap and plug into special receptors on the next brain cell. There are thousands of neurotransmitters that each perform unique functions.

Many drugs, such as cannabis, work by acting as neurotransmitter 'impostors'. Because of its long 'tail', THC can sneak into the gap between brain cells and slot itself into receptors meant for anandamide.



Anandamide (Sanskrit for "internal bliss") is a neurotransmitter responsible for stopping us from panicking. When Anandamide is working properly, our brains can cope with frights and scares and anxiety without going into overdrive.

The problem is, the THC molecule is not a perfect fit. Every time it sneaks in to the Anandamide receptors, it damages them. This can disrupt the brain's panic 'hand-brake.' When this happens, the cannabis user can suffer panic attacks, paranoia or severe anxiety.



**A panic attack can happen after just one joint.**

**In some psychiatric hospitals, 85% of patients have been cannabis users.**