

# THC VAPES

**HARM REDUCTION INFORMATION,  
GUIDE ON USE, EFFECTS AND SUPPORT**

V1.14/24



# WHAT IS THC?

**THC (aka tetrahydrocannabinol)** is the main psychoactive ingredient in cannabis.

**THC may make you feel calm, introspective (thoughtful), euphoric and giggly. Other effects can include feeling paranoid, anxious, hungry and withdrawn (not wanting to socialise or talk).**

**The duration of effects are different depending on the way it has been consumed. Generally, if you are vaping THC products, you will feel the full effects after a few minutes. These effects are likely to wear off after around one hour and after-effects may be felt for a few hours.**

As THC is a controlled drug, THC vapes are scheduled as Class B under the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971). It is therefore illegal to possess, supply, or possess with intent to supply THC vape oil.



# WHAT IS A THC VAPE?

Other names: vape pen, dab pen, THC cartridge, penjamin.

**THC vaporisers work by heating a liquid solution containing THC and other cannabinoids (called cannabis oil), rather than burning it, to a temperature at which they can be inhaled.**

**This still releases the flavour and cannabinoids, but without the smoke. In some respects, THC vapes may be less harmful than smoking cannabis joints because fewer chemicals are released and they do not usually contain tobacco or nicotine.**



# HOW MUCH ARE YOU VAPING?

How many puffs you get from a vape will vary. It depends on how strong the vape device is and how big your puffs are.

Take one or two draws and then take a ten minute break to let the effects begin before taking more. The risk of being overwhelmed is increased if you take too much too quickly.

Remember: the effects of a THC vape can feel different to smoking as there may be less CBD<sup>[1]</sup> than in herbal cannabis. After a puff, you can always have more, but never less.

[1] For more info about Cannabidiol (CBD) and its effects, check out our cannabis booklet at: [crew.scotlcannabis](http://crew.scotlcannabis)

**One vape cartridge  
containing 1g of  
80% THC oil**

**COULD BE EQUAL TO**

**4 grams of 20% THC bud  
(x12 330mg joints)**



# WHY DO PEOPLE VAPE THC?

## EASE OF USE

Compared with smoking cannabis products, vapes produce less smell, require minimal preparation and do not require a live flame.

## COMPARED TO SMOKING

Vaping THC may lead to fewer longer-term health complications than smoking joints, especially with vape juice that does not contain nicotine. However, there is limited evidence of what the long-term health effects actually are.

## COST EFFECTIVE

Thinking only in terms of the European drug market, the THC value in one gram of vape oil is usually cheaper than in one gram of herbal cannabis.



# DRUG, SET AND SETTING

## DRUG:

|           |                |
|-----------|----------------|
| TYPE      | HOW IT'S TAKEN |
| FREQUENCY | QUALITY        |
| AMOUNT    | POLYDRUG USE   |



## SETTING:

WHERE  
WHEN  
WITH WHO  
SOCIAL ATTITUDES  
SUPPORT

Adapted from Zinberg's  
Model of Drug, Set and  
Setting (1984)

## SET:

AGE  
BODY CHEMISTRY  
MENTAL HEALTH  
REASON FOR USE  
KNOWLEDGE  
EXPERIENCE

The effects of THC are dependent on many variables e.g. frequency of use, dose, purity, what other drugs it is mixed with (polydrug use), the setting — environment, and who you are with — and the set (e.g. how you feel, expectations of the experience, current health, whether you have eaten) and how you choose to take it: vape, smoke or as an edible.

# HEALTH RISKS

## INCONCLUSIVE RESEARCH

Vaping is a relatively new consumption method for cannabis, so its lifetime health impacts are still unknown. Recent research, for example, has found heavy metal particles in THC vape juice.<sup>[1]</sup>

## LUNG INJURIES

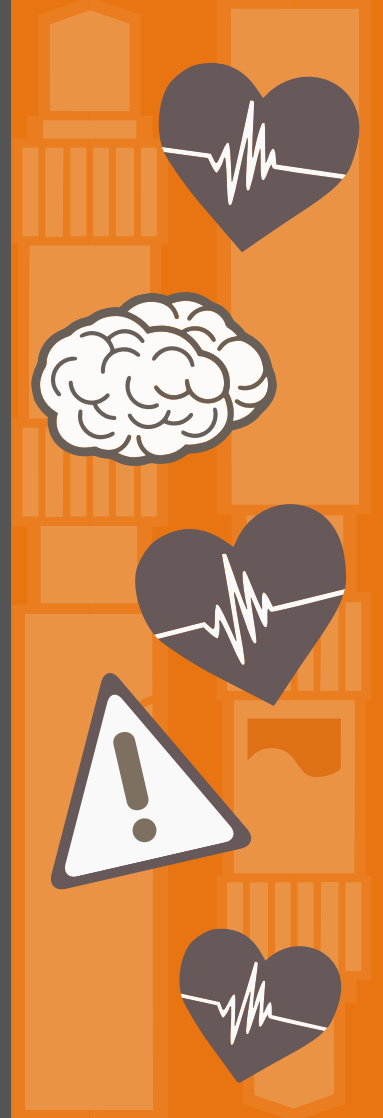
There have been cases of E-cigarette And Vaping-related Lung Injuries (EVALI) in the UK among people who consumed contaminated vape juice.<sup>[2]</sup>

## DEVELOPING HABITS

Vape pens make it easier to puff more often throughout the day compared to smoking; so you may end up vaping more frequently.

[1] *New Scientist*, 2024.

[2] *British Medical Journal*, 2021.

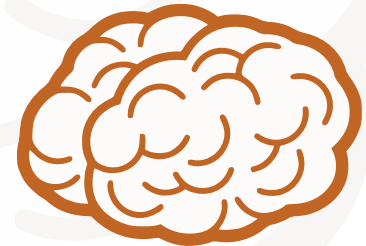


# MENTAL HEALTH

The risk of experiencing an issue with your mental health when taking drugs is increased if you are not sleeping well, eating well or are already experiencing mental health difficulties. Taking drugs in high doses, frequently dosing or taking more than one drug at a time also increases this risk.

While some people find that cannabis can help ease feelings of anxiety, for others it has the opposite effect. If you already have a mental health diagnosis, avoiding the use of cannabis might be the best thing to keep you well.

It is difficult to distinguish the direct impact of cannabis use from other factors such as age, social influence and predisposition to poor mental health; however, there have been studies which suggest consuming high potency THC may have a small causative effect on the experience of psychosis and schizophrenia.<sup>[1]</sup>



If you are concerned about your mental health, it's important to talk about it. Speak to someone you trust. You can contact the Samaritans on 116 123 and at [samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org), Breathing Space on 0800 838 584 and at [breathingspace.scot](https://www.breathingspace.scot), or CALM on 0800 585 858 and at [thecalmzone.net](https://www.thecalmzone.net)



[1] Cureus, 2020.



# SYNTHETIC CANNABINOIDS

AKA: Spice, K2, or brand names: Kronic, Clockwork Orange, Mamba

Synthetic Cannabinoid Receptor Antagonists (SCRAs) is a term used to describe over 200 different psychoactive drugs. They are lab synthesised drugs that attempt to mimic the psychoactive effect of cannabis compounds.

SCRAs are powdered chemicals, which are dissolved and sprayed onto paper or dried plant material, hence the name 'spice'. The effects can be more harmful and unpredictable than cannabis.

Between September and November 2023, 43% of THC oil samples tested by WEDINOS contained one or more SCRAs. One sample contained 3 SCRAs and no THC at all.

## Effects may include:

- Short intense high with strong urge to re-dose
- Difficulty moving, feelings of heaviness
- Nausea
- Irregular heart beat and palpitations
- Suicidal thoughts and depression
- Seizures / fitting
- Psychosis and extreme mood swings
- Loss of consciousness

# TEST YOUR VAPE OIL

The best way to avoid drug harm is to avoid taking them, but if you choose to take drugs, being informed can significantly reduce the risks.

You can submit vape oil samples to WEDINOS<sup>[1]</sup>: a free, anonymous, mail-in drug sample testing service.

All you need is a sample of your vape oil in a sealed bag / leakproof container, a stamp, an envelope and a WEDINOS "Sample and Effects" form.

We even have these available at Crew's Drop-in for you to collect if you want!



[1] [www.WEDINOS.org](http://www.WEDINOS.org)



### Step 1

Print a WEDINOS "Sample and Effects" form from [WEDINOS.org](http://WEDINOS.org), or pick one up from Crew's Cockburn Street Drop-in!



### Step 2

Fill out the form, providing details of the drug that was purchased and how it felt (if it was taken).



### Step 3

Place the form and sample (secured in a plastic bag or leak proof container) into an envelope.



### Step 4

Put a stamp on your letter and post the sample to WEDINOS to be lab-tested.

WEDINOS Project  
Cardiff Toxicology Laboratories  
4th Floor, Academic Centre  
University Hospital Llandough  
Penarth  
CF64 2XX

# CHARM REDUCTION

## START LOW, GO SLOW

Take one or two draws and then take a break to let the effects come on before taking more. The risk of the effects being overwhelming is increased if you take too much too quickly - dose low, go slow!

## STAY HYDRATED

It is important to stay hydrated. Take small regular sips of water to help reduce the feeling of having a dry mouth. Make sure not to drink too much, avoid drinking more than half a pint (285mL) of water or isotonic drink per hour.

## BRUSH YOUR TEETH AFTER VAPING AT NIGHT

THC carts, especially with flavourings, can be bad for your teeth. Keep in mind: to prevent dental erosion, it's also important to wait 20 minutes before brushing!

## AVOIDING VAPING

To reduce the potential health impacts from vaping, such as respiratory issues, it is possible to take THC in another form such as edibles. For more information on the effects and harm reduction, check out our cannabis booklet.

# LOOKING AFTER VAPES?



## INVEST IN A GOOD VAPE

Shop around for a quality vape with good reviews. Poor equipment comes with a risk of burns, fires and chemical contamination.

## CLEAN YOUR VAPE

Vapes that become clogged can be a fire hazard. It's a good idea to clean your vape regularly to stop it from overheating and to avoid inhaling any materials which may end up inside it.

## AVOID SHARING SOMEONE ELSE'S VAPE

Sharing is not always caring! Sharing vapes can spread infections, so only use your own equipment.

## BE MINDFUL WHEN RECHARGING

Vapes need to be kept in good working order. If yours starts to overheat, produce smoke or if its charging cable is damaged, then invest in a new vape. Some vapes have caused damage, such as fires, when poorly looked after.



# CUTTING DOWN?

## TAKE REGULAR BREAKS

Even if you don't want to stop completely, it is important to take regular breaks from THC to allow your body to rest and to 'reset' your tolerance so that you do not need to take as much to get the same effects.

## SET LIMITS

To stop from vaping more often or in greater amounts than you intend, set personal limits for yourself. These could be based on the amount you are planning on purchasing or how many puffs you will take per day. This will also help with your tolerance.

## CHECK IT OUT

If you are taking your vape more frequently than planned, or in a way that does not feel intentional, it might be a good idea to lay off it for a while. Check out how risky your THC use is at: [crew.scot/check-it-out](https://crew.scot/check-it-out)

# IN AN EMERGENCY

- Keep calm and get help
- Call 999 (or 112)
- Give as much information as possible including location, age, gender, what's happened and be honest about what the affected person has taken
- Stay with them
- If they are distressed, sit them somewhere calm and give reassurance
- If they are fitting, keep the area safe and move anything that could hurt them
- If they are overheating, take them somewhere cooler, loosen tight clothing, cool them using fans or wet towels and give them small sips of water
- If they are unconscious, put in the recovery position (or on their side) and monitor breathing. If they stop breathing, perform CPR (chest compressions and rescue breaths)

If you think opioids may be involved (e.g. they have taken heroin or are on a methadone prescription), administer Naloxone.

Naloxone is a life-saving drug that reverses the effects of an opioid overdose and can help to prevent overdose deaths.

It is FREE and anyone aged 14 or over, likely to witness an opioid overdose, can be trained and grab a nasal Naloxone kit from the Crew Drop-in. Anyone aged 16+ can access intramuscular Naloxone after training.

Anyone wanting to book Naloxone training, or find out more, can visit...

[www.crew.scot/what-we-do/get-naloxone](http://www.crew.scot/what-we-do/get-naloxone)

# WHERE TO FIND US:

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**Text: 07860047501**

**Website: [www.crew.scot](http://www.crew.scot)**

**Instagram: @Crew\_2000**

**Twitter: @Crew2000**

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