

# Health risk to cannabis smokers

**Smoking cannabis** – the most widely used illegal drug in the UK – poses a greater health risk than tobacco according to a study by the British Lung Foundation. New, more potent strains of the plant could mean the adverse effects of smoking three joints could be equivalent to 20 cigarettes

**Lungs:** Inhaled tar – three times more than from an unfiltered cigarette – contains 50% more carcinogenic hydrocarbons than tobacco smoke

**Brain:** Increased dopamine levels heighten risk of schizophrenia.  
*Average joint today contains 150mg of psychoactive ingredient THC, compared to 10mg in 1960s*

## **Respiratory burden:**

*Cannabis users generally inhale two-thirds greater volume, one-third deeper and hold breath four times longer*

## **Immune system:**

Impairs function of white blood cells – which prevent lung infections – and **macrophages**, which suppress tumour growth

**Heart:** Unsubstantiated link with heart disease

## **Therapeutic benefits**

- ① Can relieve eye pressure for glaucoma sufferers
- ② Eases muscle pain and muscle spasms
- ③ Suppresses nausea, increases appetite

