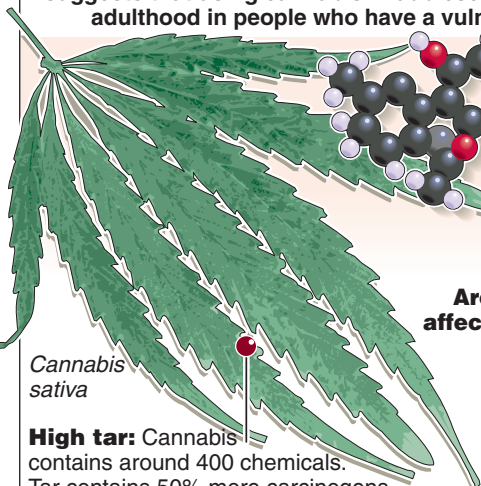


Health fears as cannabis downgraded

Cannabis is to be reclassified from a class B to class C drug in the UK, putting it on the same level as steroids and tranquillisers. But research suggests that using cannabis in adolescence may induce psychosis in adulthood in people who have a vulnerability to mental illness



Active ingredient:
Molecule called
tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)

Brain: THC releases
neuro-transmitter *dopamine*.
Drugs that increase dopamine
levels are linked to psychosis

**Areas
affected**

cerebral cortex
(concentration,
perception)

hippocampus
(memory)

cerebellum
(movement)

*Cannabis
sativa*

High tar: Cannabis
contains around 400 chemicals.
Tar contains 50% more carcinogens
than tar from tobacco

Varying strength of cannabis

1960s: Cannabis imported from
Middle East and Asia
THC content – Resin and grass: 4-5%

Today: New hybrid varieties, grown
indoors in specially enriched soils

THC – Super Weed:	10%
Super Haze:	Up to 12%
Skunk:	8-13%
White widow:	Up to 19%

**Increased risk of psychosis from
regular cannabis use by age**

Starting
age 18 60%

Starting
age below 15 450%

More likely (%)

100 200 300 400 500

Sources: British Lung Foundation; Institute of Psychiatry, London

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