



cannabis potency

how strong is cannabis?

- the amount of THC (the mind-altering chemical in cannabis) determines its strength
- the amount of THC depends on the strain of the plant, how it is grown, the part of the plant used and how cannabis is prepared for use and stored

strain and growing

- the way cannabis is grown affects THC levels and therefore the potency
- the male plant fertilises the female plant and if females are grown in isolation, the flowering tops are unfertilised
- unfertilised female plants have high THC levels
- genetic modification produces plants with more THC
- it is claimed 'hydro' cannabis is much stronger than 'bush', but this has not been proven

parts of the plant and potency

- the flowering tops of the female plant ('buds'), have higher THC levels than the leaves
- stalks and seeds have lower levels of THC
- the most common form of cannabis in Australia is marijuana
- marijuana potency varies from less than 1% to 20%
- hash oil has the highest THC: 15-30%, followed by resin

has cannabis become stronger?

- even though the media reports that cannabis is stronger today than in the past, this has not been proven scientifically
- the increase in cannabis-related health problems in the last 20 years is likely due to people smoking stronger parts of the plant (flowering tops) and using bong, one of the most harmful ways of taking cannabis
- the health problems may also be due to starting and regularly using cannabis at a young age

Take home message:

The strength and effect of cannabis is determined by the part of the plant used, how it is prepared, how it is used and who is taking it