



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

What You Need to Know About Cannabis Concentrates

What are cannabis concentrates?

Cannabis concentrates are cannabis products that contain very high amounts of THC and/or CBD— the active ingredients in cannabis. Examples of common cannabis concentrates are dabs (wax concentrates), shatter (a solid, glassy concentrate) and hash oil (an oily liquid product).

Cannabis extracts can be concentrated through physical methods like heating or pressing, or chemical methods like dissolving cannabis in flammable solvents and distilling. Butane is the most commonly used solvent. Solid cannabis concentrates (dabs, shatter) are consumed by vaporizing the product on a heated platform and inhaling the vapor via a tool called a “dab rig”. Liquid products are consumed using a vape pen.

Levels of THC in cannabis concentrates vary from 40 to over 90 per cent. Cannabis flower or dried cannabis typically contains around 20 per cent THC.

What are the health impacts of cannabis concentrates?

The high concentration of THC in cannabis concentrate products has several health impacts including:

- Increased risk of physical dependency or cannabis use disorder
- Anxiety, agitation, paranoia and temporary psychosis
- Cannabis-induced hyperemesis (repeated and severe bouts of vomiting associated with frequent and long-term cannabis use)
- There is a growing association between cannabis use disorder and psychosis, particularly for individuals with a family history of psychosis

There are also risks to the methods of consuming cannabis concentrates like:

- Inhalation of contaminants like pesticides or residual solvents (butane, CO2) used to make the products
- Risks to lung health such as bronchitis, lung infections, chronic cough and mucus build up in the chest

Due to the high levels of THC in the product, cannabis concentrates can be addictive. When a person stops using cannabis concentrates, it can lead to withdrawal symptoms such as irritability, anxiety, upset stomach, sweating, loss of appetite and trouble sleeping.





How can I quit or reduce taking cannabis concentrates?

Taking a **harm reduction approach** to cannabis concentrates can help you reduce the impacts on your health. Harm reduction strategies for cannabis concentrates include:



Start low and go slow. Start with a single puff and wait at least 15 minutes to feel the effects before choosing to consume more



Know the THC and CBD content of the cannabis concentrate



Consider using products with lower THC and higher CBD



Avoid inhaling too deeply



Consider non-smoking alternatives such as edibles

What is psychosis?

Psychosis is a condition that effects the mind where people have trouble distinguishing what is real or not. Symptoms can include seeing and hearing things that are not there as well as having delusional beliefs, which are beliefs that are false but the person experiencing them believes them to be real. This can be frightening for the person experiencing psychosis.

A person who uses cannabis concentrates can experience temporary psychosis brought on by high doses of THC. The risk of temporary psychosis increases with two factors—the amount of exposure a person has had to cannabis concentrate and when cannabis concentrate with higher THC levels is consumed.

A person with a family history of psychosis or schizophrenia who uses cannabis is at greater risk of developing psychosis and schizophrenia. It's important to talk to your doctor for more information about cannabis use and the effects it has on health, particularly if you have experienced temporary psychosis from cannabis use.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

You can find more materials at fnha.ca/cannabis.

We also have a webinar on cannabis concentrates available [here](#).