

This resource provides a summary of gunja, including info on what it is, how it affects your mind and body, what happens when you have too much, mixing with other drugs, ways that you can be safer, and where to get support if you need it.

**Also known as:** *yarndi, cannabis, grass, weed, bud, pot, dope, cones, marijuana.*

## What is gunja?

Gunja comes from the cannabis plant, which contains THC (tetrahydrocannabinol).<sup>1</sup>

## How is gunja used?

- The flowers of the plant are smoked in a joint or used in a bong.
- The hashish or 'resin' of the plant is baked into snacks such as brownies or muffins (edibles).
- Gunja oil from the plant is used in a vape or on the tip of a smoke.<sup>2-4</sup>

## How gunja can make you feel (short-term):

Your mood before you use gunja, the people you are with, and the surroundings you're in can impact your experience. You might feel:



'high' or 'stoned'

relaxed

happy

sleepy

excited

anxious

paranoid.<sup>5,6</sup>

When smoking, you feel it straight away. When eating, it may take as short as 30 minutes or as long as two hours before you start feeling something.<sup>5,7</sup>

## What gunja can do to your body (short-term):



red eyes

slow reflexes

trouble remembering things

fast heart rate

dry mouth

increased hunger.<sup>5,6</sup>

This also depends on your size/weight and health, if you're used to gunja, if other drugs are taken around the same time, how much you use, and the strength of the gunja.

## How long does gunja last?

1-4 hours when smoked. 4-10 hours when eaten.

## What happens when I use too much gunja at once?

- fear/panic
- racing thoughts
- anxiety
- seeing or hearing things that aren't there
- vomiting.<sup>7</sup>

If you or someone you know has a bad reaction after taking gunja, call triple zero (000) immediately. Ambulance officers do not have to involve the police unless there is a threat to their safety.

## What happens if I use a lot of gunja for a long time?

Regular use of gunja may lead to:

- dependence/addiction
- harder to think, learn, remember and make decisions
- breathing/lung problems, if smoked
- making current mental health conditions worse
- your Mob might get worried about you.<sup>8-10</sup>



## What happens when I stop using gunja after a while?

Giving up gunja after a long time can be hard because the body is not used to going without it. You might go into withdrawal and experience:

- sweating or feeling cold
- having trouble sleeping
- losing your hunger
- feeling sick
- feeling anxious or annoyed.<sup>11</sup>

It's important to speak to a doctor or other support person when planning to stop using gunja, you can also call one of the support numbers at the end of this page.

## What happens when I mix gunja with other drugs?



**Gunja + alcohol:** might make you feel a bit sick and wobbly, and can lead to vomiting.<sup>7</sup>



**Gunja + GHB/heroin:** these drugs can make the effects of each other a bit stronger.<sup>7</sup>



**Gunja + ice/cocaine:** can make effects stronger and lead to anxiety, paranoia, confusion, and having lots of negative thoughts.<sup>7</sup>

## How can I stay safer?

- If smoking, try not to have it with tobacco.
- Keep bongs and pipes clean and try not to use plastic bottles which can cause toxic fumes.
- Consider using a vape instead of a bong or joint.
- Don't drive or operate machinery after using.
- If eating gunja, wait at least two hours to start feeling something before having any more.
- Try not to use if you are feeling sad, anxious or have ever experienced psychosis.<sup>7</sup>

## Where to get support:

### National Alcohol and Other Drug Hotline (24/7): 1800 250 015

You can speak with a counsellor over the phone, get information on drugs and links to support services. They speak to family and friends too.

### 13 Yarn (24/7): 13 92 76

If you need some crisis support, you can get free assistance from this Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander crisis support line.

### Brother to Brother (24/7): 1800 435 799

Free 24-hour crisis line to support Aboriginal men experiencing issues relating to relationships, family violence, drugs and alcohol.

### Yarning Safe and Strong (24/7): 1800 959 563

A service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. You can get free counselling over the phone. They can also support friends and families who need to have a yarn with someone about their wellbeing.

### Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS): 03 9419 3000

Provides a wide range of in-person health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Victoria. You can find similar services in different locations across Australia using HealthInfoNet's resource: [Map of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health/medical services](#).

#### References

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