**The Effects of Cannabis: How It Changes Your Mind and Body**

As marijuana becomes legal in more states, one cannot help but think about the reach it has in various parts of the country. After all, with many people now having access to cannabis, there are now also different ways to go about consuming this drug.

With its ever-growing demand and accessibility nowadays, it has become more apparent that there has been a rise in taking a closer look at the effects of cannabis on people’s minds and bodies. With individuals experiencing different effects from one person to another, one begs the questions, “What does marijuana really do to our brain? Can it affect my body as well?”

If you have ever wondered about these things every time you smoke pot or even reach for the edibles, we have got you covered. This article will give you the down low on the effects of cannabis on both your mind and body.

**Understanding How Cannabis Works**

Cannabis is often called weed, pot, and other names. It is usually used for smoking or vaping, as part of edibles, brewing it as a type of tea, in oil, tincture, or even topical form. Marijuana comes from the flower of the cannabis plant and can be used for medicinal or recreational use depending on the designated purpose of the user.

Marijuana contains tetrahydrocannabinol, otherwise known as THC. This is the cannabis compound responsible for intoxicating users and giving them the “high” commonly associated with the drug. In addition, individuals can also experience sedation and impaired thinking, a boost in their creativity, cottonmouth, and many others.

While marijuana can produce these effects in individuals, not all types of cannabis can produce these effects every single time. This is because there are tons of cannabis varieties in existence and each of these has a corresponding cannabinoid content, meaning they vary also in potency and cannabinoid make.

When it comes down to it, the euphoric effects that are usually associated with stoner culture can be attributed to Cannabis Sativa. This particular cannabis species is known for its higher and more potent THC levels and relatively lower cannabidiol (CBD) levels. This species directly impacts the brain, hence the term “brain high.”

Cannabis Indica, on the other hand, is more concerned with the impact it brings on the body. Unlike its previous counterpart, this cannabis species is not necessarily lower in THC levels and contains higher levels of CBD. Rather than the intoxicating and high-inducing properties associated with the former, the Cannabis Indica type is associated with pain and inflammation management and mood improvement. At the same time, it also boosts energy and improves cognition, to name a few.

**Cannabis and Its Relationship to the Endocannabinoid System**

Both THC and CBD work their magic by being absorbed by the body through smoking, vaping, eating, drinking, and the like. It inhibits and binds with the endocannabinoid system of the body.

Our endocannabinoid system is mainly composed of two types of receptors, namely the CB1 and CB2 receptors. This system is designed to address cannabinoids that enter our body and maintain balance throughout our body. The CB1 and CB2 receptors are also present in other bodily systems like the circulatory, digestive, immune, nervous, and reproductive systems.

Of these receptors, the CB1 is mainly found in the central and nervous systems of the body, while CB2 receptors are found in the peripheral nervous system.

Having said that, it is also important to point out that our body is also capable of producing its own cannabinoids. These are called endocannabinoids. Meanwhile, cannabinoids that are derived from plants are called phytocannabinoids.

When the endocannabinoid receptors interact with cannabinoids, we can experience different effects depending on the interaction of the cannabinoid with the receptors. This can happen when we consume cannabis.

**Cerebral Effects of Marijuana**

When we consume cannabis species that are high in THC, THC binds with and activates the CB1 receptors. In turn, this results in the activation of feelings of happiness and euphoria, as well as brain fog, and other types of cerebral effects.

* Provide Euphoric Experiences

THC interacts and stimulates the endocannabinoid receptors found in the brain, most of which are responsible for making us feel happy and contented. Known as the reward system of the brain, this aspect is programmed to help us respond to activities that make us feel good, such as eating well, having sex, and other similar events.

When our brain’s reward system interacts with cannabis, it can create euphoric feelings and experiences. This is because it triggers the release of dopamine in the brain, allowing us to become more sensitive to how we perceive experiences. Combined with the feel-good hormone, this increased sensitivity creates a euphoric experience.

* Creativity

Another signature effect of cannabis is heightened thinking. Let’s look back at stereotypical cannabis consumers in pop culture. Usually, these characters come up with some of the most creative ideas and reasoning. Just take a look at Doug Forcett in the show The Good Place who was portrayed as a stoner who came up with the most accurate theory about the afterlife.

Studies show that cannabis can enable creativity by making us more aware of our experiences. In addition to this, an elevated mood can make us feel more confident and open to new ideas, which can encourage divergent thinking.

* Impaired Judgement

One thing that we need to remember is that cannabis contains a psychoactive ingredient, which can inhibit self-consciousness and cause slow mental processing, also called brain fog. This lack of awareness and mental agility results in impaired judgment.

This is why it is not advisable to drive or operate heavy equipment while under the influence of the plant.

* Paranoia and Anxiety

Paranoia and anxiety are side effects of marijuana along with an impaired judgment. Keep in mind that this plant can make you more aware of your surroundings. In excess, this can lead to anxious feelings and paranoid ideations.

**Cannabis Effects on the Body**

Aside from affecting the mind, this plant can also affect the body. In fact, medical marijuana is prescribed for a good number of medical conditions. Some effects can be beneficial to us, while others can be considered side effects.

* Provide Pain and Inflammation Relief

The Food and Drug Administration has approved a few drugs containing natural and synthetic cannabinoids to treat some medical conditions. These medications include Epidiolex containing CBD, as well as Marinol, Syndros, and Cesamet, all containing synthetic forms of THC.

Epidiolex is created to address rare forms of seizures thanks to its anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant properties as it interacts with CB2 receptors in the peripheral nervous system and immune cells. This cannabinoid can also relieve pain by interacting with parts of the brain that are in charge of pain and pleasure.

* Offer Calm and Relaxation

Another bodily effect of cannabis is calm and relaxation. This plant is often prescribed to individuals suffering from mood and mental disorders like anxiety, depression, and PTSD, just to name a few. With the right strain, cannabis can help elevate our mood, relieve stress, and soothe tensions.

Moreover, it has a sedative effect that can let you feel more tranquil. This makes the plant a great option for those of us who are looking for a good night’s rest.

* Users Can Get the Munchies

The munchies are one of the most stereotypical effects of cannabis. Cannabinoids bind with CB1 receptors in the central nervous system, a lot of which deal with the urge to intake food and body weight. This is why consumers tend to feel hungry while riding a cannabis high.

This effect is advantageous to patients suffering from wasting syndrome or cachexia, or those with diseases that cause excessive weight loss.

* May Bring on Respiratory Problems

Cannabis is often consumed through smoking, which is one of the fastest ways to feel its effects. While some argue that cannabis smoking is less hazardous than tobacco smoking, it is important to remember that any smoke can have negative effects on the respiratory system. Excessive and overly frequent smoking can cause respiratory problems.

Luckily, were can find a wide variety of infused products such as vape pens, gummies, oils, capsules, and many others. The challenge here is we need to find the right products. Vaping can be a good alternative to smoking, but keep in mind that medical experts are wary about EVALI, an lung injury associated with e-cigarettes and vapes.

Another thing to keep in mind is that those consumed orally such as gummies and capsules need to pass the digestive system, which can take time to deliver effects, but effects can be amplified. Meanwhile, tinctures and oils applied sublingually are the faster alternatives.

**Final Thoughts**

Cannabis offers a lot of benefits to our mind and body, but we should always take note that there can be side effects. Now that we understand more how the plant and its cannabinoids work in the human body, we can choose the right products to suit our needs and preferences.

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