

Uses, Benefits And The Science

# MEDICINAL CANNABIS

The Complete Guide



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# What Is Medicinal Cannabis

Medical News Today states, "According to the National Institutes of Health, people have used marijuana, or cannabis, to treat their ailments for at least 3,000 years."

If you aren't familiar with medical cannabis by now, then it's time to get acquainted. Cannabis has a long list of uses, from building materials, clothing, rope, and paper made from its fibrous stalks to the medicinal uses for its roots, leaves, and flowers. The seeds are also often used for fuel oil and food.

The flowers and leaves can be consumed in a variety of ways, we'll discuss application methods in deeper detail later. For now, we'll simply highlight that it's available loose, concentrated, or pressed resin. Once the leaves of the plant mature, the flowers are heavily coated in trichomes. These are the tiny glands of oil that contain terpenes and cannabinoids. It is this that produces the psychoactive and physical effects that cannabis is famous for.

There are over 100 different cannabinoids. They bind to receptors in your brain to trigger the effects we know it for and react with the body's endocannabinoid system. The cannabinoids we are most familiar with are CBD and THC. The former is the non-psychoactive compound, while THC is the psychoactive compound. CBD offers those looking for relief, but no high, an option to find help with their issues.

The use of cannabis for its healing properties is ancient history, references to its therapeutic use date back to ancient China where cannabis was used as a medication to balance the body. It was in 1854 that cannabis entered the US Pharmacopoeia.

We have a far greater understanding today of cannabis and its potential for healing. In the United States, research of the plant is restricted due to its classification. However, there is a



range of studies from all over the world highlighting just how powerful cannabis can be in the healing process.

According to the Washington Post, "A 2013 survey in the New England Journal of Medicine found that nearly 8-in-10 doctors approved the use of medical marijuana. Now, a wide-ranging survey in California finds that medical marijuana patients agree: 92 percent said that medical marijuana alleviated symptoms of their serious medical conditions, including chronic pain, arthritis, migraine, and cancer. The data come from the California Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, a representative health survey of 7,525 California adults produced by the Public Health Institute in partnership with the CDC. Researchers found that in total, five percent of California adults said they had used medical marijuana for a ""serious medical condition.""

## Marijuana Statistics

Here are some interesting facts about marijuana use in America.

- Number of Legally Registered Medical Marijuana Patients In The United States as of 2020: 224,887,997
- US Medicinal Marijuana sales in 2019: \$5.2 BILLION
- Expected Market Growth by 2025: 23 BILLION

Legal marijuana sales are forecasted to increase steadily with each consecutive year.

There is a wide range of health benefits to medical cannabis, we'll touch on them more after we discuss the different strains of cannabis that you can choose from.

# Guide To The Different Strains

There are three different main strains of cannabis, thanks to genetic breeders. Of the main three, the hybrid is the most predominantly found. All of these options will produce similar effects, from appetite stimulation to pain control and improved sleep. However, each strain will have a different terpene and cannabinoid content, which will influence the effects.

As we are all individuals and our bodies respond to medications differently, so do we respond differently to different strains. You might find one more beneficial to you versus others.

High levels of CBD in a strain often provide greater pain relief benefits. Let's take a look at the major differences between the three.

## Sativa

The primary way Sativa operates revolves around thoughts and feelings. Sativa triggers feelings and it's often the preferred choice for daytime use. The typical therapeutic effects of using Sativa include energizing, stimulating, boosts mood and reduces depression, relieves nausea, good strain for AIDS and cancer patients since it boosts appetite, migraines, headaches, and provides your creativity and focus with a boost. Overall, it increases your sense of well-being.

Often, Sativa is referred to as a "daytime" strain and the Medical Marijuana Association says since Sativa is low in CBD and fairly high in THC, it produces a more energetic effect as it stimulates the mind and not the body.

There has been a lot of argument about whether the use of cannabis increases negative mental health effects or simply exacerbates existing issues. If you already struggle with anxiety and paranoia, this strain may increase those feelings.



## **Indica**

Indica produces a body high, it mutes feelings and is the preferred nighttime option. It relaxes and relieves stress, reduces pain, improves sleep, relaxes spasms, relieves anxiety, nausea, and stimulates appetite. It may also help reduce the frequency of seizures.

As far as potential side effects go, using Indica may result in fuzzy or foggy thinking or feeling tired.

## **Hybrid**

A hybrid is a strain that crosses strains. Generally, one of those strains if more dominant. For example, a Sativa-dominant strain might work to increase appetite and reduce muscle spasms.



# **Medicinal Marijuana: Forms And Administration Methods**

## **Forms Of Marijuana**

A product of the hemp plant (*cannabis sativa*) that contains THC - delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol, its psychoactive ingredient and appears as green, gray, brown mixtures of buds, shredded leaves, seeds, and flowers.

### **Stronger forms of marijuana include**

- Sinsemilla
- Hashish
- Resins – wax and hash oil
- Shatter – amber colored solid containing high doses of THC

## **Administration Methods**

### **Inhalation By Way Of Vaping And Smoking**

- Oils (can contain up to 80% THC)
- Dried leaves and buds (contain 5-20% THC)

Fastest delivery method



### **Oral**

- Edibles (brownies, candies, shakes)
- Tinctures
- Capsules
- Oils

Onset is slower than but effects are stronger and last longer than inhalation

We cannot forget edibles! This is a popular option among people who don't want to or can no longer smoke. You can ingest cannabis that has been added to cookies, cakes, candies, dressings, and just about any food! It can also be brewed in coffee, tea, or other beverages. Here's the thing, the only way to ensure its effectiveness is to heat the cannabis to extract the concentrates.

The process of digestion alters the cannabinoids metabolism, which changes the matter of the THC. It produces a different reaction than smoking it does, it can take longer to take effect, and the results last longer.

Cannabinoids dissolve in butter, oils, fats, and alcohol because they're fat-soluble. They will not dissolve in water. There are various forms of edible medications and the potency will depend on what was used to create them. Hash-based edibles tend to have a stronger concentration of THC and are more potent.

Cannabis oil is simply any type of cooking oil that has been infused with cannabinoids. Essentially, it's created by heating the cannabis and oil at a low temperature and then straining the plant life. It can then be used in any recipe that cooks below 280 degrees Fahrenheit.

Cannabis butter is another popular option. It's a simple process, just heat your raw flowers with butter to extract the cannabinoids. You can use it on toast or include it in a recipe that cooks below 280 degrees Fahrenheit.

To jazz up your hot beverages, you may be interested in cannabis liquor. It's made by cooking leaves and steams into rum or brandy. This can then be added to a cup of coffee or another beverage you'd like to try.

**Tincture** - A tincture requires ethanol alcohol (not rubbing alcohol, pure grain alcohol) to extract cannabinoids from the cannabis flower. Generally, the droplets are dropped underneath the tongue where the mouth's mucous membranes will quickly absorb it. It can also be turned into a sublingual spray. It's the same process, but instead of a tincture, it is put into a spray pump to spray it beneath the tongue.

## **Sublingual – Under The Tongue**

- Dissolvable strips
- Sublingual sprays
- Medicated lozenges
- Tinctures

Time of onset similar to oral consumption

## **Topical**

- Lotions
- Creams
- Salves
- Bath salts
- Oils

Cannabinoids penetrate through the skin to reduce inflammation and pain, typically from joint related conditions such as arthritis. This application method is non-psychoactive. Onset is within minutes and effects last from 1 to 2 hours.

It isn't all edibles, smoking, or tinctures. You may be interested in a topical solution.

Cannabinoids are combined with a topical cream to target an affected area directly, whether it's an allergy, muscle pain, strain, inflammation, or swelling. When used topically, there is no psychoactive effect. You can opt for a nice salve that is rubbed directly on the skin after being heated with coconut oil and then combined with beeswax. Or a cannabis cream that is heated with ingredients like shea butter. Again, it can be rubbed directly on the skin. Typically, topics are used for analgesics or anti-inflammatory purposes.

## **More About Application Methods**

The most popular form of cannabis consumption is the dried bud (or flower) that comes from a mature female plant. That is not, however, the only option. In fact, many of the concentrates

and extracts that are growing in popularity in the United States have been widely used all over the world.

There are a variety of ways to separate a plant from the trichomes that pack the cannabinoid. This is how concentrates are created. The flower or leaves can be sifted using a fine screen, this can be done by hand or using a motorized tumbler. This is known as a fry swift. It's also possible to collect resin from fingers after rolling the flowers between the fingers. It ruptures the trichomes and produces what is known as finger hash.



Alternatively, cannabis can be submerged in ice water. It is then agitated to solidify the trichomes. Then the mixture is filtered through screens. The trichomes can then be dried and pressed into a block known as bubble hash.

While there are other options, like butane extraction, the three above are the most common and certainly, the safest options.

## Kief And Hashish Cakes

Kief, powder created from trichomes, can be pressed to make hashish cakes. However, it can also be smoked through a pipe or sprinkled over the flower.

Hashish (or hash), as noted above, is compressed trichomes. It possesses the same cannabinoids as the flower but it's often more powerful than a flower because the concentration level is higher. Hash can be soft and pliable, almost like a paste, if it is good quality. It becomes harder (thus less potent) as oil evaporates during the oxidation process. Typically, hashish can range in THC content from as low as 15% to as high as 70%. It can be used in food, in a pipe, using a vaporizer or a hookah, or even rolled in a joint with other flowers or herbs. It varies in color, due to storage, manufacturing, harvesting methods, but can be anywhere from golden to black.

Some people believe the effects differ when smoking hash. The fact of the matter is that the effects vary just as the effects of different cannabis strains do. It isn't down to hash itself, but rather the variations and strains used to make it.

## **Hash Oil**

Hash Oil is a combination of resin (from the cannabis flowers) and essential oils. Hash oil has a high rate of cannabinoids. How much THC does it contain? Anywhere from 30% to 90%. It can be consumed via vaporized, added to food, smoked with a specialty pipe, or mixed with flower.



# Pharmaceutical Cannabis

Many states have decriminalized cannabis or made medicinal cannabis legal. This is what you need to know. They are standardized in terms of dose, composition, and formulation. You know every time you take it you will get the same reaction every time, whether it's a spray or a pill.

## Dronabinol

It's also known as Marinol or Syndros. It comes in capsule form and has been classified as a Schedule III drug. It's used to treat the side effects of chemotherapy such as nausea, vomiting, appetite loss. It is also often used for AIDS patients experiencing appetite issues and weight loss. It contains no CBD but has THC that has been suspended in sesame oil.



## Sativex

A mouth spray designed to alleviate symptoms related to cancer and MS. It is used to treat pain, overactive bladder, and spasticity. It comes from two cannabis strains, uses THC and CBD, and is suspended in ethanol. Every spray delivers 2.5mg of CBD and 2.7mg of THC.

## FDA Approved Drugs And Their View On Cannabis

This is the statement provided on the FDA's website...

"The FDA understands that there is increasing interest in the potential utility of cannabis for a variety of medical conditions, as well as research on the potential adverse health effects from use of cannabis. To date, the FDA has not approved a marketing application for cannabis for the treatment of any disease or condition. The agency has, however, approved one cannabis-derived drug product: Epidiolex (cannabidiol), and three synthetic cannabis-related drug products: Marinol (dronabinol), Syndros (dronabinol), and Cesamet (nabilone). These approved drug products are only available with a prescription from a licensed healthcare provider. Importantly,

the FDA has not approved any other cannabis, cannabis-derived, or cannabidiol (CBD) products currently available on the market” (<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/public-health-focus/fda-and-cannabis-research-and-drug-approval-process>).

These are available through prescription only and can only be obtained from a licensed healthcare provider.

## Uses and Benefits

As individuals, we experience everything differently. The use of cannabis is no different. While you may experience a profound sense of relaxation while smoking an Indica strain, someone else may have the opposite effect. While much of it is down to individual people, there are other factors that influence the effect from the amount used, the dosage of it, the strain of cannabis, the method of consumption, your mindset or mood from the outset, your diet, the setting, and the type of cannabis.

For anyone unsure of how best to consume cannabis, you might need to do some experimentation before you decide what strain and method are right for you. Firstly, you may want to try all of the strains to determine which produces the response in your body you're looking for. It might sound much, but if you want to do this right then you can keep a journal with notes on how you respond to each.

You will use less of it if you opt for a higher potency cannabis. If you find you need higher doses, a concentrate may be more useful to you. If your problems revolve around pain, nausea, and appetite, then a high CBD strain is a good place to start. If you think your normal strain is losing its effectiveness, then you can change variety. You may find that you prefer Sativa for daytime use and switch to Indica for nighttime use, or perhaps a hybrid fits you for all occasions.



It's important to consider drug interactions. Right now, there are no known issues. However, there is a suggestion that cannabis increases the effects of opiates, which is something you should consider before taking them together. If you're unsure, you should speak to a doctor who can advise you. There have been some suggestions that cannabis can interact with fluoxetine, antihistamines, barbiturates, sedatives, etc. Alcohol is another substance best avoided.

Let's look at the potential symptoms, illnesses, and issues, that science suggests cannabis may assist with.

## Pain Management

Our body uses pain to communicate the message that something is not right within our system. Pain is very complex, and depending on its cause, is not always very easy to treat. Sometimes our pain can become chronic, which means that we continue to experience pain even after the initial injury has healed. Chronic pain is very difficult to live with each day and can lead to ongoing physical and emotional challenges.

According to the article "Acute vs. Chronic Pain" from Cleveland Clinic, chronic pain may be linked to symptoms such as decreased energy, decreased ability to move, and depression ("Acute vs. Chronic Pain, n.d.).

The Harvard Health blog highlights the power of medical cannabis to relieve chronic pain (<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/medical-marijuana-2018011513085>), an issue that millions of Americans deal with daily. In fact, according to the CDC, 20% of Americans struggle with chronic pain (<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6736a2.htm>). The University of South Carolina has highlighted its power to relieve inflammation, which may provide some explanation for the pain relief it provides (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2828614/>).

According to AARP, "more than 600,000 Americans turn to cannabis for relief from chronic pain — and the scientific evidence for its effectiveness is substantial. In gold-standard randomized clinical trials of people who had agonizing health concerns — peripheral neuropathy (nerve pain

from diabetes), spinal cord injury, HIV or complex regional pain syndrome, cancer, chemotherapy, muscle and joint problems, rheumatoid arthritis and multiple sclerosis — cannabis reduced pain by 40 percent, according to the 2017 NASEM report” (<https://www.aarp.org/health/drugs-supplements/info-2019/cannabis-for-medical-conditions.html>).

The American Society of Anesthesiologists states that there are many options for pain relief, from prescriptions and over-the-counter medications such as opioids, ibuprofen, and Tylenol, to more technical options including the use of electrical stimulation units or pain pumps. Alternative options for pain management also include chiropractic care, massage therapy, or physical therapy (“Non-Opioid Treatment,” n.d.).

More people have begun to use medical marijuana to help manage their chronic pain, as changing policies, and legislation around the use of both medical and recreational marijuana have made it more accessible (Hill et al., 2017).

Medical marijuana refers to either the use of the whole cannabis plant or components of the plant, such as CBD (cannabidiol), to manage symptoms of illnesses or other conditions. CBD is the second most prevalent of the active ingredients in cannabis and does not cause a “high” (Grinspoon, 2018).

## **Marijuana And Chronic Pain**

According to a post entitled “Medical Marijuana” from the Harvard Health Blog, the most common use of medical marijuana is for pain control. However, the author contends that medical marijuana may not be strong enough for severe pain. He states that medical marijuana may be more effective in treating chronic pain instead, as it appears to help decrease nerve related symptoms and promote muscle relaxation. Anecdotal evidence suggests that medical marijuana can also help lessen tremors from diseases such as Parkinson’s (Grinspoon, 2018).

A study titled “Cannabis and Pain: A Clinical Review” looked at scientific evidence to support this increased use of medical cannabis. They did find limited evidence to support the use of cannabis

pharmacotherapy in specific situations. For example, in a situation where a patient with chronic pain is working closely with their physician and has already tried more traditional methods of pain relief without success, a trial of cannabis may be considered as a next step (Hill et al., 2017).

## **Neuropathic Pain**

Another study found in JAMA, reviewed medical literature regarding marijuana use from 1948-2015. The authors found that evidence did support the use of medical marijuana for chronic pain, neuropathic pain, and spasticity associated specifically with a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis (Hill, 2015).

Neuropathic pain can occur when the nervous system is not functioning properly. For example, if a person has sustained a stroke, the nerve fibers that communicate with the brain may be damaged. This damage can cause sensations that may not otherwise be painful, to be interpreted by the brain as pain (“Types of Chronic Pain,” n.d.).

## **Migraines**

AARP says, “a study of 2,700 older patients in Israel gave cannabis high marks for reducing pain and improving quality of life for those with Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, Crohn’s and ulcerative colitis” (<https://www.aarp.org/health/drugs-supplements/info-2019/cannabis-for-medical-conditions.html>).

In conclusion, some research does support the use of medical marijuana for pain management in specific circumstances. However, more research is needed to fully understand the indications, contra-indications, side-effects, and effects of long-term use of medical marijuana to manage pain.



## **Glaucoma**

It's important to note right off the bat, no one is suggesting cannabis can cure glaucoma. It's more about relieving the symptoms surrounding the illness. Glaucoma affects the optical nerve and creates inter-ocular pressure resulting in vision loss or blindness.

Cannabis *does* relieve that pressure (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK224386/>), but for only 3-4 hours at a time. It's unlikely that you would be able to consume it often enough to make a real difference without impacting your daily life. However, that doesn't mean you can't use it to find some relief, alongside CBD, and the treatment suggested by your ophthalmologist. The key, with any alternative medicine, is to listen to medical advice while seeking alternative help.

## **Arthritis**

AARP reports, "arthritis was the top reason older adults used cannabis in a 2019 Colorado survey, followed by back pain. Overall, 79 percent said it helped."

Overall, medical marijuana is being used to treat many different conditions, few of which actually have the evidence to support the treatment (Hill, 2015). The American Society of Anesthesiologists also cautions that more research is needed to fully understand the risks, side-effects, and benefits of the use of cannabis for pain management.

They also warn consumers that CBD and other medical marijuana products may not have been regulated by the FDA, and that the product ingredients may actually be different than what is listed on the label ("Non-Opioid Treatment," n.d.).

A study from the University of Nottingham in England, carried out a laboratory study with rats to determine whether cannabis could provide relief from arthritis symptoms (<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0080440>). The researchers set out to test whether

activating the CB2 receptor in the brain would reduce the pain related to osteoarthritis. To do so, each rat had a chemical injection to create an osteoarthritis reaction in their left knee.

The result was inflammation and damage as humans experience during osteoarthritis. The rats were then given a placebo injection or the drug JWH133. The real drug binds with the CB2 receptors and activates a response. The rats given the JWH133 injection experienced reduced both inflammation and pain.

The researchers didn't stop there. They also took a look at the CB2 receptors in the spine of humans who had died with osteoarthritis in their knees. They discovered that the severer the disease, the less receptive the CB2 would be.

## Cancer Patients

According to The American Cancer Society, studies have found cannabis can relieve the nausea and vomiting that come with chemotherapy and pain from damaged nerves (<https://www.cancer.org/treatment/treatments-and-side-effects/complementary-and-alternative-medicine/marijuana-and-cancer.html>).

Another perk is that cannabis stimulates the appetite helping cancer patients increase much needed nutrient intake.

While much research is still needed, early studies have found that cannabis may slow the growth of cancer cells. This hasn't been studied in humans at this stage, it has only been observed in animal studies, as well as lab dish grown cancer cells.

## **HIV**

Additionally, The American Cancer Society has also pointed to studies citing that cannabis may help HIV patients in need of assistance with stimulating their appetite (<https://www.cancer.org/treatment/treatments-and-side-effects/complementary-and-alternative-medicine/marijuana-and-cancer.html>).

## **Epilepsy**

The predominant studies surrounding cannabis and epilepsy focus in and around the use of CBD products rather than THC. However, since you can opt for cannabis with a higher ratio of CBD to THC, the research is still valid. A joint study from Newcastle

University and the University of Dublin, Trinity College found that many of the CBD trials carried out in the UK have been moved from promising to proven (<https://pn.bmjjournals.org/content/18/6/465>).



The problem, of course, comes in with all of the over the counter CBD options on offer. These aren't up to the standard necessary to produce meaningful assistance when dealing with epilepsy. However, there is an FDA approved option for CBD medication to treat epilepsy (Epidiolex).

## **PTSD**

A study published in the Journal of Psychiatry & Neuroscience extolled the potential virtues of cannabis assisting in the relief of PTSD symptoms (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6397040/>). For now, the majority of this research has been in animals due to the restrictions surrounding cannabis and its study. Thus far, the studies with features have featured only a few participants which makes it difficult to determine the true effects.

Sadly, many of the studies involving humans were of low-quality and did not put controls into place. For now, we have only the high-quality animal studies to look at and as such, the evidence is tentative that cannabis, CBD to be more precise can provide relief from the symptoms of PTSD.

## **Alzheimer's Disease**

Can cannabis help with Alzheimer's disease? According to studies from Woosuk University, Jeonju Korea, it looks promising (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6970569/>). Researchers looked at nine research studies surrounding cannabis for dementia treatment.

Those nine studies found that the CBD compounds found in cannabis can be useful in both treating and preventing Alzheimer's Disease because CBD suppresses the causal factors causing Alzheimer's Disease. However, it is more useful to use a combination of THC and CBD rather than one or the other on its own.

## **Appetite Loss**

If there is one thing you probably know about cannabis it's the munchies they bring. The munchies are no joke. In fact, a study from Drs Randy and Lori Sansone have found that the munchies can make a major difference to patients dealing with appetite loss (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4204468/>). This applies to HIV, AIDS, and cancer patients.

## **Insomnia**

This is more complicated than you'd like to think. Sleep is one of the most important basic functions you can keep on top of. Your body needs time to repair, reset, download information, and energize.

So, can cannabis help you with an insomnia problem? The short answer is yes, but it isn't as simple as that. You see, CBD has been shown to interrupt REM sleep and leave you restless. Whereas THC can improve sleep. So, if you want to use cannabis to improve your sleep you're going to have to find a high ratio of THC with little to no CBD (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/your-brain-food/201904/marijuana-insomnia>).



# Cannabis Myths, Precautions, and Risks

There are plenty of myths in terms of cannabis. It isn't a gateway drug, it won't kill off all of your brain cells, nor does it leave you depressed. The more we understand about addiction, the more researchers have recognized that cannabis is not traditionally addictive, particularly when used medicinally. Often, people turn to marijuana to replace their dependence on alcohol, prescription drugs, or other illicit substances.

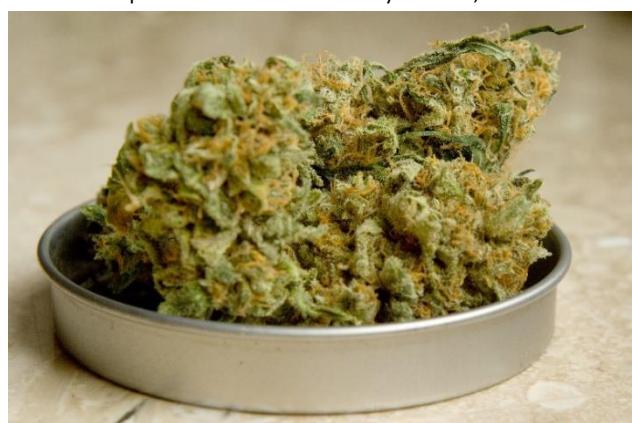
What works for others might not work for you. Not all cannabis is the same, the intensity can vary even within strains. There is a concern for people with compromised immune systems, however. When you buy from a dispensary you can rest easy knowing cannabis has been tested for contaminants like mold, pesticides, heavy metals, or mildew. It's worth your health and safety to do some due diligence.

Are there risks related to taking medical cannabis?

There are some side effects related to cannabis, including anxiety, altered sense of time, reddened eyes, bronchitis (when smoked), decreased eye blink rate, reduced tear flow, dizziness, changes in visual perception, dry mouth, reduced coordination, dysphoria, and sedation.

According to the CDC, it has low to moderate potential for dependence

([https://doh.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/doh/publication/attachments/Medical%20Cannabis%20Adverse%20Effects%20and%20Drug%20Interactions\\_0.pdf](https://doh.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/doh/publication/attachments/Medical%20Cannabis%20Adverse%20Effects%20and%20Drug%20Interactions_0.pdf)). That puts it on a par with caffeine.



## Possible Side Effects

- Increased heart rate
- Dizziness
- Impaired concentration

- Impaired memory
- Slower reaction times
- Increased risk of heart attack and stroke
- Increased appetite
- Potential for addiction
- Cyclic vomiting syndrome
- Hallucinations or mental illness
- Withdrawal symptoms

## Marijuana Use Disorder

*"Like any substance, using marijuana can lead to a marijuana use disorder, which may involve dependence or addiction. In fact, recent research shows that 30 percent of people who use marijuana may have some sort of marijuana use disorder (Is marijuana addictive?"*

*(<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana/marijuana-addictive>).*

According to Very Well Mind, marijuana dependence is described as, "you feel withdrawal symptoms when not using, including irritability, feeling restless, craving marijuana, decreased appetite, trouble sleeping." Marijuana addiction is described as, "you are unable to stop using marijuana, even if it interferes with your social, family, work or school, or financial life."

## Under The Influence

As far as precautions go, you should avoid driving when under the influence of any drugs (or alcohol). You should avoid alcohol altogether if you are taking cannabis.

## Drug Interactions

Additionally, you should be wary of cannabis if you are on warfarin, theophylline, or Clobazam. There haven't been a lot of studies on medications and cannabis use, however, there are some. It's always wise to speak to your doctor if you are on medications.

For example, both THC and CBD increase Warfarin levels when taking Warfarin while taking cannabis. Whereas smoking cannabis can reduce levels of theophylline. It's always best to gather as much knowledge about your medications and potential side effects to be on the safe side.

## Ask Your Doctor

Whatever alternative medicine you pursue, it's always best to double-check with a doctor or an expert in the field to determine your best course of action. For example, you may be fine with THC, but not CBD or vice versa. There may be topical solutions that can deal with your problem and do so safely versus smoking.

With so much to choose from, the sky's the limit. In fact, when it comes to choices, let's talk about getting started! Before you make any moves, there's a bit of research and information gathering you should do to ensure you are making informed decisions throughout your medical cannabis journey.



## Getting Started

Before you embark on your cannabis journey, it's a good idea to know which condition or symptoms you are trying to treat. If you have been diagnosed with a serious medical condition, then medical cannabis may help. **It's always wise to speak to your doctor first, especially if you are on a variety of medications.**

Alternatively, a knowledgeable marijuana consultant should be able to offer advice on which strains help with which symptoms. The general rule of thumb, of course, is that Sativa provides a boost, whereas Indica serves as a relaxant.



The most important aspect of the cannabis plant? Cannabinoids. As of right now, we recognize over 100 different cannabinoids. They bind to receptors in your brain to trigger the effects we know it for and react with the body's endocannabinoid system. The cannabinoids we are most familiar with are CBD and THC. The former is the non-psychoactive

compound, while THC is the psychoactive compound. CBD offers those looking for relief, but no high, an option to find help with their issues.

One important consideration to factor in is the ratio between the two because they influence how the plant affects your body. When you purchase from a pharmacy, the packaging will list this ratio by percentage. Typically, marijuana flowers or buds are high in the psychoactive compound THC. However, you can ask your budtender for a strain high in CBD.

If you're purchasing other cannabis products, then the ratio will likely be listed in milligrams. If it is listed as a ratio, know that CBD is listed first, and then the THC component (in states like California). For example, if the ratio is 2:2, then it's somewhat psychoactive.

However, if it's a ratio of 15:2 it wouldn't be. In New York, however, the opposite is true. This is why it's so important that you read labels carefully to ensure you know what you are purchasing and know how best to consume it. Only buy products that are lab tested.

## **How Do I Get It?**

This is a more complicated topic that all depends on the state you live in. You may be able to walk into a dispensary and shop a variety of options just as you would a candy store. If you live in California or Colorado, then you will have no problem finding a dispensary. Word on the street is Denver now has more dispensaries than they do coffee shops. Your best bet is to consult your laws at the state level and find out how you can qualify for a medical prescription if that's your only option.

There are states that only offer CBD oil as a medical option, which is helpful if you're seeking treatment-resistant pain relief. Once you have the paperwork necessary, you can pursue the right prescription. In some states, a prescription will allow you to try your hand at growing your own plants at home.

You may have no options whatsoever or have the chance to visit your doctor for a prescription. You can find further details on your state's laws from the source (<https://disa.com/map-of-marijuana-legality-by-state>). For now, a quick glance at the information below will tell you if your state allows the use of medical cannabis or it is fully legalized.

# Marijuana Laws By State

## 2020 MARIJUANA LAWS BY STATE

State	Medical Marijuana	Recreational Marijuana
Alabama	Illegal	Illegal
Alaska	Legal	Legal
Arizona	Legal	Illegal
Arkansas	Legal	Illegal
California	Legal	Legal
Colorado	Legal	Legal
Connecticut	Legal	Illegal
Delaware	Legal	Illegal
Florida	Legal	Illegal
Georgia	Illegal	Illegal
Hawaii	Legal	Illegal
Idaho	Illegal	Illegal
Illinois	Legal	Legal
Indiana	Illegal	Illegal
Iowa	Illegal	Illegal
Kansas	Illegal	Illegal
Kentucky	Illegal	Illegal
Louisiana	Legal	Illegal
Maine	Legal	Legal
Maryland	Legal	Illegal
Massachusetts	Legal	Legal
Michigan	Legal	Legal
Minnesota	Legal	Illegal
Mississippi	Illegal	Illegal
Missouri	Legal	Illegal
Montana	Legal	Illegal
Nebraska	Illegal	Illegal
Nevada	Legal	Legal
New Hampshire	Legal	Illegal
New Jersey	Legal	Illegal
New Mexico	Legal	Illegal
New York	Legal	Illegal
North Carolina	Illegal	Illegal
North Dakota	Legal	Illegal
Ohio	Legal	Illegal
Oklahoma	Legal	Illegal
Oregon	Legal	Legal
Pennsylvania	Legal	Illegal
Rhode Island	Legal	Illegal
South Carolina	Illegal	Illegal
South Dakota	Illegal	Illegal
Tennessee	Illegal	Illegal
Texas	Illegal	Illegal
Utah	Legal	Illegal
Vermont	Legal	Legal
Virginia	Legal	Illegal
Washington	Legal	Legal
Washington, D.C.	Legal	Illegal
West Virginia	Legal	Illegal
Wisconsin	Illegal	Illegal
Wyoming	Illegal	Illegal

Source: <https://medicalmarijuana.procon.org/legal-medical-marijuana-states-and-dc>

# Marijuana Laws By Country

2020 MARIJUANA LAWS BY COUNTRY		
Country	Medical Marijuana	Recreational Marijuana
Argentina	Legal	Illegal
Australia	No	Legal
Barbados	Legal	Illegal
Bermuda	Legal	Illegal
Brazil	Legal	Illegal
Canada	No	Illegal
Chile	Legal	Illegal
Colombia	Legal	Illegal
Croatia	Legal	Illegal
Cyprus	Legal	Illegal
Denmark	Legal	Illegal
Estonia	Legal	Illegal
Georgia	No	Legal
Finland	Legal	Illegal
Germany	Legal	Illegal
Greece	Legal	Illegal
Ireland	Legal	Illegal
Israel	Legal	Illegal
Italy	Legal	Illegal
Jamaica	No	Legal
Lithuania	Legal	Illegal
Luxembourg	Legal	Illegal
Malta	Legal	Illegal
Mexico	Legal	Illegal
The Netherlands	No	Legal
New Zealand	Legal	Illegal
Norway	Legal	Illegal
Philippines	Legal	Illegal
Poland	Legal	Illegal
Portugal	Legal	Illegal
Vincent and the Grenadines	Legal	Illegal
San Marino	Legal	Illegal
Sri Lanka	Legal	Illegal
South Africa	No	Legal
Switzerland	Legal	Illegal
Thailand	Legal	Illegal
United Kingdom	Legal	Illegal
United States	Legal In Some States	Legal In Some States
Uruguay	No	Legal
Vanuatu	Legal	Illegal
Zimbabwe	Legal	Illegal

Source: <https://moneymorning.com/2020/02/04/marijuana-legalization-around-the-world-countries-where-marijuana-is-legal>

## **Final Thoughts**

While the majority of states allow use of cannabis, it is still against Federal law. The Federal Government classes it as a Schedule I drug and believes it to have no medical value, while offering a high chance of abuse. Until it is removed from this classification, it is dangerous to travel with it, especially if you cross into other states with different laws.

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