



- The American Psychiatric Association (APA) does not endorse cannabis as medicine and states there is not enough evidence-based research to support its use.<sup>11</sup>
- Most marijuana-derived products are not FDA-approved, so they are not held to the same standards as prescription medications.

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## What is medical and recreational marijuana?<sup>1</sup>

Medical marijuana is marijuana used to treat medical conditions. This is allowed by some states, but not the U.S. government. Recreational marijuana is marijuana used by a person to “get high” rather than treating a medical condition. Recreational marijuana is legal in some states.

## How does marijuana affect your brain?<sup>2,3</sup>

- The two most common chemicals in the marijuana plant are tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD).
- THC and CBD work in the brain and spine to change appetite, sleep, short-term memory, and coordination.
- THC and CBD can also affect the immune system, how pain is felt, and inflammation.
- CBD is the chemical that appears to have the most medical benefit.
- If used as a teen or young adult marijuana may increase the risk of psychosis.

## What are edibles?<sup>4</sup>

- Marijuana edibles are eaten rather than smoked.
- Examples include hard candies, chocolates, gummies, and drinks.
- Edibles can be made for personal use from an oil form of marijuana or purchased from a medical or recreational dispensary.
- Edibles can contain hemp seed oil, CBD, THC, or a combination of CBD and THC and vary in potency.
- Edibles impact mood and behavior, often with a delayed effect that lasts longer than smoking marijuana.

## What conditions could marijuana benefit?<sup>5,6\*</sup>

- Nausea, low appetite, or pain associated with cancer
- Nausea, vomiting, difficulty eating/weight loss associated with HIV/AIDs
  - Dronabinol (Marinol, Syndros)<sup>®</sup> is a form of THC available by prescription only for adults to increase appetite and decrease nausea and vomiting from cancer treatment or HIV/AIDs.
  - Nabilone (Cesamet<sup>®</sup>) is a prescription medication similar to THC that can also be used to decrease nausea and vomiting from cancer treatment.
- Certain types of seizures
  - Cannabidiol (Epidiolex)<sup>®</sup> is a CBD medication available by prescription only for children and adults for this use.
- Elevated inner eye pressure, such as in glaucoma
- Severe muscle spasms due to multiple sclerosis (MS)

\* This list is not comprehensive

### What are some diseases/situations marijuana could worsen?<sup>7,8\*</sup>

- Acute psychosis
  - Schizophrenia
  - Anxiety
  - Panic attacks
  - Difficulty handling stress
  - Memory
  - Lung function/infections
  - Decrease in cognition/brain development with regular use as a teen
- \* This list is not comprehensive

### If you're using marijuana, here are some safety tips:<sup>9</sup>

- Tell your healthcare provider if you're using marijuana. It can change the way your prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, and supplements work.
- Do not purchase marijuana from street dealers. Products sold in licensed stores are normally safer; however, each state has different rules for product quality.
- Avoid using marijuana with other substances, including alcohol
- There can be a difference in the potency (how strong it is) between medical and recreational marijuana formulations.
- Never operate a motor vehicle after using marijuana. You can be cited for driving under the influence (DUI) and potentially pay a fine or serve jail time.

### What are important laws to know regarding marijuana?<sup>10</sup>

- The U.S. government has stated laws that marijuana has no accepted medical use and has high potential for abuse. It is illegal in the U.S. to grow, sell, or have marijuana on you.
- As of February 2022, 37 states, four U.S. territories and Washington D.C. have some type of medical marijuana/cannabis programs. As of November 2021, 18 states, two U.S. territories and Washington D.C. have some form of recreational marijuana for individuals 21 years and older.
- Rules on how to get medical marijuana differ by state. All states require proof of a medical condition marijuana can treat, a physician note, and a personal identification card.
- Providing medical marijuana to patients without proper identification is illegal.
- You cannot travel between states with marijuana for medical or recreational use. This is true even if both states have legal recreational marijuana, such as Washington and Oregon.
- Many employers still test for marijuana before you start a job or while you are working. There could be negative consequences to testing positive, like being fired or not being allowed to start.



Go online to find more information about medical marijuana and to view the references for this toolkit.

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