

Medical Cannabinoids



There are a lot reasons people might ask their health care provider about medical cannabinoids or medical marijuana. You may have heard that it can help with some health problems.

Maybe you are interested because it is natural. Or maybe you have tried it in the past and found it helpful.

What are medical cannabinoids?

The word “cannabinoids” can mean two things: marijuana (dried plant or oils) and manufactured products (sprays or pills). Some people use cannabinoids recreationally and some people use them to treat health problems.



There are a lot options when treating health problems. It is suggested that you try some standard treatments before thinking about medical cannabinoids.

Will medical cannabinoids work for me?

There’s not a lot of high quality research on medical cannabinoids. But based on the best research, cannabinoids may help people with:

- Nerve pain
- End-of-life pain
- Nausea and vomiting caused by chemotherapy
- Muscle spasticity caused by multiple sclerosis (MS) or spinal cord injury

What percentage of patients will get better?

Benefit	With Placebo	With Cannabinoids
Reduce nerve pain	30%	38%
Reduce end-of-life pain	23%	30%
Reduce nausea and vomiting caused by chemotherapy	13%	47%
Reduce spasticity caused by MS or spinal cord injury	25%	35%

For more information please go to:
www.pain-calculator.com

Common side effects

Side Effect	With Placebo	With Cannabinoids
Low blood pressure	11%	25%
Dizziness	11%	32%
Memory problems	2%	11%
Feeling sleepy	30%	50%
Feeling "high"	3%	35%
Muscle twitching	11%	30%
Feeling unhappy	Less than 1%	13%
Numbness	4%	21%
Feeling disconnected from reality	0%	5%
Trouble speaking	7%	32%

Things to consider

If you are thinking about using medical cannabinoids, smoked marijuana is not recommended. Smoking may cause other harms.



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Why might my health care provider say "no" to cannabinoids?

- Overall the research is poor
- For most health problems, there's not enough research to tell if they work
- Side-effects are common
- Long-term harms are unknown

Why is my health care provider suggesting manufactured cannabinoids instead of marijuana?

Manufactured products (sprays or pills) are like marijuana but have been studied more. Doses can be controlled better. Also, some of the manufactured products might be covered by your drug plan.



Start the conversation

Some people worry that their health care provider does not want to talk about cannabinoids. Talking about cannabinoids is important. Your health care provider can work with you because cannabinoids may:

- Affect your medications
- Cause side effects
- Be expensive
- Improve your symptoms, leading to a change in other medication

You should always talk to your health care provider before starting or changing treatment.