

Is cannabis safe?

Just like alcohol and tobacco, cannabis is not a benign substance and can pose health risks. Cannabis may not be appropriate if you:

- Are allergic to any cannabinoids or to smoke
- Have serious liver, kidney, heart or lung disease
- Have a personal or family history of serious mental disorders such as schizophrenia, psychosis, depression or bipolar disorder
- Are pregnant, planning to get pregnant or breastfeeding
- Have a history of alcohol or drug abuse or substance dependence

Talk to your pharmacist and healthcare practitioner if you have any of these conditions.

CANNABIS SMOKE

The inhalation of any smoke can lead to lung damage and respiratory issues. Cannabis smoke contains chemicals and tar similar to that of tobacco smoke. Different administration routes result in different drug effects, with vapourization and ingestion being the most common.

Smoking is not recommended.

How can my pharmacist help me with cannabis?

Your pharmacist is an essential member of your healthcare team. Here are some ways they can help you with cannabis:

- Provide up-to-date evidence-based information, and address questions or concerns about cannabis
- Provide tailored therapy advice for patients using medical cannabis on drug interactions, dosing, symptom relief, and side effect management
- Provide knowledge and support to help you live a long and happy life

Talk to your personal pharmacist for more information.

1455-16th Avenue, Unit 1 & 2
Richmond Hill, ON L4B 4W5
905-709-9609

REFERENCES

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The Medicine
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PHARMACY

Questions about cannabis?



Talk to your personal pharmacist today.

What is cannabis?

The term “cannabis” is used to describe products derived from the whole cannabis plant or its extracts. Cannabis is a type of plant with a number of different species. Sativa and Indica are the two most common cannabis species.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEDICAL AND RECREATIONAL CANNABIS?

Here are some key differences between medical cannabis and recreational cannabis:

Medical	Recreational
Relieves symptoms while minimizing side effects	May be used for euphoric effects
Authorized by prescriber for medical use	No prescriber involvement
Healthcare practitioner-led education, dosing and monitoring	No pharmacist education or management
Is obtained through a federally-regulated process	Is obtained through a provincially-licensed retailer, amongst others

What are the effects of using cannabis?

COMMON SHORT-TERM EFFECTS INCLUDE:

- Euphoria (high)
- Relaxation
- Heightened senses (sight, taste, smell, sound)
- Fatigue
- Confusion
- Anxiety
- Hallucinations
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Impaired ability to remember, concentrate, and react quickly

In adults, the effects of cannabis can last up to 2-4 hours when inhaled, and 4-6 hours when ingested. In children, the effect can last up to 6-12 hours when ingested. In some cases, effects can last up to 24 hours in adults and children. Cannabis use is generally not recommended for those under 25 years of age.

There have been no deaths attributed to cannabis overdose, as it is close to impossible to ingest a lethal dose.

However, consuming a large amount may lead to exaggeration of side effects mentioned and is not recommended.

For common long-term effects, ask your pharmacist for more information.

Does cannabis interact with other substances?

ALCOHOL

Cannabis and alcohol use have some similar effects. If taken at the same time, their effect can combine, be stronger, last longer and could lead to potential accidents. If drinking responsibly is important when consuming alcohol, it is strongly not recommended to combine the two substances.

Just like drinking and driving, drug-impaired driving is against the law due to the sedating, psychoactive and physiological effects of cannabis.

TOBACCO

The combination of tobacco and cannabis should be avoided as it has been associated with developing a dependence on either substance, as well as negative impacts on mental health.

MEDICATION

Cannabis can interact with many drugs, over-the-counter medicine, and natural health products.

Talk to your pharmacist today to review your medication for potential interactions.