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- The American Psychiatric Association’s (APA) position on marijuana is that there is not enough evidence to support its use, and there is a high risk of abuse and misuse.⁷
- Most marijuana-derived products are not FDA-approved, so they are not held to the same standards as prescription medications.

What is medical and recreational marijuana?¹

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?^{2,3}

- 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 conditions could marijuana benefit?^{4*}

- Nausea, low appetite, or pain associated with cancer
 - Nausea, vomiting, difficulty eating/weight loss associated with HIV/AIDs
 - Certain types of seizures
 - Elevated inner eye pressure
 - Severe muscle spasms due to multiple sclerosis (MS)
- * This list is not comprehensive

What are some diseases/situations marijuana could worsen?^{5*}

- Acute psychosis
 - Schizophrenia
 - Anxiety with long-term use
 - Panic attacks
 - Difficulty handling stress
 - Memory
 - Lung infections
- * This list is not comprehensive

If you're using marijuana, here are some safety tips:

- 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.
- There can be a difference in the potency (how strong it is) of medical marijuana and recreational marijuana products.
- 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?⁶

- The U.S. government has laws that marijuana has no 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 March 2021, 36 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have some type of medical marijuana/cannabis programs. Fifteen states 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.

cpnp.org/390127

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