

HEALTH USES



Medical marijuana is available in many forms. Some have higher levels of THC, which causes intoxication. Other forms have higher levels of cannabidiol (CBD), which does not cause intoxication.

For some people, marijuana may improve symptoms of:

- Chronic pain caused by cancer or nerve problems
- Muscle spasms due to multiple sclerosis or spinal cord injury
- Severe lack of appetite
- Nausea
- Very rare forms of epilepsy

Important things to know about medical marijuana:

- Medical marijuana products are not regulated.
- Different products have different ingredients and may not offer the same potential health benefits.
- Many product labels are inaccurate and have chemical levels that don't match what is described on the packaging.

If you are considering medical marijuana for your health condition, talk to your doctor so you can choose the best treatment for you and your lifestyle. More effective medications are often available.

HEALTH RISKS

Short-term risks

happen at the time of using marijuana:

- Slowed reaction time
- Decreased attention
- Increased risk for motor vehicle accidents
- Reduced short-term memory
- Increased heart rate
- Increased risk for heart attack or stroke

Long-term risks

happen over time when using marijuana regularly:

- Chronic bronchitis
- Increased risk of schizophrenia or psychotic disorders
- Lower sense of satisfaction with relationships, recreational activities, and work

Research also shows that marijuana use may be linked with:

- **Mental health problems**, including depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts.
- **Cancer**, including lung and other types of cancer in people who smoke marijuana.
- **Other lung and breathing problems**, including asthma and pneumonia in people who smoke marijuana.

Symptoms of marijuana withdrawal

When people who use marijuana daily stop using it, about half will have withdrawal symptoms, including:

- Irritability
- Sleeping difficulties
- Low or sad mood
- Craving
- Anxiety

Risks of marijuana for people under age 25



Chemicals found in marijuana interfere with normal brain development. The brain keeps developing into one's mid 20's. During this time, the brain is more easily harmed.



Research shows that IQ declines in people who use marijuana frequently when they are under age 25. They also tend to have less educational success.

Younger people have a higher risk of addiction and other problems with marijuana.

In fact, 1 out of 6 people who start using marijuana as teenagers become addicted.

Using marijuana makes it harder for young people to achieve their life, work, and school goals.



Is marijuana harmful?

A wide variety of marijuana products are now legally available in Washington State. Some people use marijuana for enjoyment and others use it to help with symptoms of health conditions.

Many doubt that marijuana use is harmful because a lot of people who use it don't appear to experience problems. The media has also reported on potential benefits of marijuana. For some people, though, it can cause health and social problems and lead to addiction.

If you use marijuana, take a little time to think about the role it plays in your life. What is the balance of benefit versus risk?



Did you know

About 1 in 11 people who ever use marijuana become addicted.

For those who start as teenagers, the risk of becoming addicted is greater.

About half of people who use marijuana daily have withdrawal symptoms when they stop.



Talk With Your Doctor

Even if you don't want to stop using marijuana, you may want to cut back. Ask yourself these questions, then talk with your doctor about your answers.

- Have you wanted to cut back or stop, but found that you couldn't?
- Do you spend a lot of time using marijuana or recovering from being high?
- Do you feel a craving for marijuana?
- Has using marijuana made it harder for you to take care of your responsibilities?
- Have you continued to use marijuana even when it caused trouble with your family or friends?
- Have you stopped doing things you enjoy because of your marijuana use?
- Do you ever do dangerous things after using marijuana, such as drive a car?
- Have you continued to use marijuana even when it made you feel anxious or caused other health problems?
- Over time, have you had to use more marijuana to feel the effect you want?
- Do you feel like you're not yourself when you don't use marijuana? For example, do you feel irritable, have trouble sleeping, or notice other problems?
- Have you had times when you used marijuana more, or for longer, than you wanted to?

Marijuana and health...

What you should know

