



Guide to Using Cannabis

Using Marijuana

Smoking

Smoking marijuana produces the most immediate effects and permits the most refined control of your dosage. Smoking any material is not good for the lungs, but the amount of marijuana you need to smoke is so small that you need not be overly concerned. It is better to smoke the flowers rather than the leaves as this also reduces the amount you will need to smoke.

Vaporizing

Cannabis vaporizers are designed to let users inhale active cannabinoids while avoiding harmful smoke toxins. They do so by heating cannabis to a temperature that is just below the point of combustion where smoke is produced. At this point, THC and other medically active cannabinoids are emitted with little or none of the carcinogenic tars and noxious gases found in smoke. Many medical marijuana patients who find smoked marijuana highly irritating report effective relief inhaling through vaporizers. Also, vaporizers are very efficient so they can save money in the long term.

Eating

Marijuana can be eaten. When consumed this way, it is usually baked in brownies or cookies, and sometimes made into a candy. It takes longer to feel the effects when eaten, and may take longer for you to learn to control your dosage. However, when you do feel the effects, they may be stronger than those felt by smoking. You may also feel a certain heaviness in your body. This will not hurt you. Schedule your time so that you can relax when you take it.

Tea

Like other herbs, marijuana may be made into a tea. Boil the water first and pour it over the marijuana. Let it steep for longer than you would for common black tea; approximately an hour and a half. Add 1 teaspoon of butter. The effects are similar to eating it.

Tincture

To prepare a tincture, use 5 parts fresh marijuana to 1 part vodka. If you are using dried marijuana, as is usually the case, use 10 parts marijuana to 1 part vodka. An easy way to do this if you don't have measuring equipment, is to fill whatever container you are using (glass is preferable as you don't want to leech any residues from metal containers) to thirds full with marijuana, then fill the container with vodka and let stand for a week or more. Afterward, strain the solution. If you use a larger portion of marijuana, the resulting tincture will be more potent.

Compress

Follow the recipe as for tea. Make as much as you need to thoroughly soak the cloth you intend to use. Apply to pain and leave on ½ hour.

Marinol

Marinol is a synthetic petrochemical analog of THC, one of the active elements found in marijuana. Some patients find that it helps relieve nausea yet takes a long time to work. Do not smoke this product. It has the potential for overdose. Use only under the supervision of a doctor.

Side Effects

Marijuana is one of the safest medicines: it is impossible to consume enough to produce a toxic effect in the body. However, if you are unfamiliar with it, there are some effects which you should be aware of so that you can use it more effectively.

Uneasiness

Marijuana usually has a soothing and comforting effect on the mind. Sometimes, however, people do experience feelings of anxiety. If this happens to you, there are several things you can do. Try to stay in environments where you feel naturally comfortable. If you feel anxious, sit or lay down, breathe deeply, and relax. If you have loved ones with you, hold each other for a while. If you have a pet, hold or stroke it. Eating will often quickly reduce the feeling of anxiety. Then, the next time you use it, try reducing your dosage. Because of our social training, you may have feelings of guilt. Know that you have a right to your medicine.

Hunger & Thirst

Many patients use marijuana to stimulate appetite. If you are not using marijuana for this purpose, drink water or juice. If you wish to eat, eat good nourishing food rather than sweets.

Redness in the Eyes

This will not hurt you. If you must go out in public and are concerned about others' reaction to the redness, wear sunglasses or use eye drops.

Drowsiness

If marijuana makes you sleepy, take a nap if you can and wish to. As with all medicines that can produce drowsiness, don't drive or operate heavy machinery.

Sleeplessness

If you find that you can't sleep for a while after using marijuana, try reducing your dosage and avoid using it for about two hours or so before you want to sleep.

Short-term Memory Loss

Sometimes people find it difficult to carry on a complicated conversation, keep track of details, or perform complex tasks. If this happens to you, schedule your time so that you don't have to do these things when using your medicine.

Giddiness

Many people find that things which normally don't seem funny become quite amusing when they use marijuana. Most people enjoy this effect. If you must deal with situations where humor would be inappropriate in your judgement, schedule your time so that you don't have to deal with them when you are taking your medicine.