

# Safe Use of Cannabis

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**Pharmacology and Mode of Action:** The chief active agent of cannabis is 9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), but there are 60 cannabinoids which have been identified. Cannabis primarily acts on the central nervous system.

**Uncertainty of Potency:** Because of the uncertainty of supply from cannabis' illicit status, there can be a great variation in strength requiring cautious experimentation.

**Precautions and Potential Adverse Effects:** Smoking cannabis can cause an irritation of the throat. Prolonged, repeated exposure to these irritants can lower resistance to respiratory infections. Rare cases of pre-cancerous changes in the throat have been found in very heavy marijuana smokers. Theoretically long-term heavy use of inhaled smoke of any kind has the potential for causing or contributing to various cancers. For this reason, we encourage you to use other forms of ingestion, including tinctures, food products, capsules, and the use of a vaporizer. Cannabis can increase heart rate. There have been a few reported cases of angina (chest pain) in patients with coronary artery disease. Intake of toxic dosages can cause the following adverse reactions: mental confusion, lack of concentration, impairment of short term memory, heightening of sensory impression, anxiety, paranoia, panic, fear of loss of control, alienation or detachment, increased heart rate, dry mouth, and reddened eyes. Chronic use can result in laryngitis, bronchitis, suppression of immune function, apathy, psychic decline and disturbance of genital function.

**Pregnancy and Lactation:** Safe use has not been established-there is a lack of research in this area.

**Dosage:** Starting with a small amount of gradually increasing the dose until the minimum effective dose is reached is the key to avoiding unwanted side effects. Effects from smoking occur within a few minutes, peaks in 2-3 hours, and lasts for approximately 8 hours. The most common mistake of the inexperienced user is to repeat the oral dose with the consequence of overdosing.

**Please be advised of the following:**

- **You are advised to be discrete in your use and/or cultivation of marijuana.**
- **Guidelines for growing are being established by each county; be informed.**
- **It is legal for you to carry less than an ounce on your person, but you may be ticketed.**
- **Possession of over one ounce is still illegal outside your home.**
- **DO NOT use marijuana while driving. Driving under the influence is potentially dangerous.**
- **Driving under the influence of cannabis may result in a DUI.**
- **Be sure to carry your cannabis approval card, or a copy of your recommendation at all times.**
- **Diversion of marijuana for other than medical use is illegal.**
- **THIS IS YOUR MEDICINE. IT CANNOT BE SHARED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.**