



Dartmouth-Hitchcock— Facts for Patients Using Cannabis (Marijuana) to Treat Symptoms

Using cannabis to treat symptoms has risks and benefits. You are in charge of your own safe use. Medical use requires that you register with the state and get a certificate. This means filling out forms and paying fees. These must be renewed each year. Be aware that cannabis is not covered by insurance. Forms and further information- NH: <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/oos/tcp/> VT: <https://medicalmarijuana.vermont.gov/>

Facts to consider about using Cannabis to treat symptoms of a medical condition

- Many claims about the benefits of marijuana are not proven. More high-quality research is needed.
- Cannabis should be used as a therapy only when other proven treatments have failed.
- THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) and CBD (cannabidiol) are the chemicals best studied in cannabis.
 - **THC** causes the “high” of cannabis and can be addicting.
 - **CBD** does not cause a high.
- Cannabis products vary in content and strength.
- It’s safest to use products with the lowest amount of THC, in the smallest dose, and for the shortest time.
- Cannabis taken by mouth, or under the tongue, or chewed as candy can take time to kick in. This makes it easy to overdose. Start with a small amount, and wait at least 2 hours before taking more.

Possible legal risks of taking cannabis for symptoms, even with a certificate

- It is not legal to use cannabis in public places or to take cannabis products across state lines.
- You can be charged with driving under the influence.
- Employers may drug test you. If you test positive, they may not hire you or may fire you.

Possible health risks and side effects of cannabis use

- Feeling sleepy, dizzy, afraid or confused
- Seeing or hearing things that are not really there (hallucinating)
- Problems in daily life (work, school, relationships)
- Changes in reaction time, which can increase the risk of injury and accidents
- Increased appetite and weight gain
- Feeling sick to your stomach and throwing up
- Heart problems, including heart rhythm problems, heart attack or stroke
- Worsening of lung problems and chance of developing new ones (from smoking or vaping)
- Effects on other medicines, possibly changing the levels in your body or how well they work
- Withdrawal symptoms if cannabis is stopped. These might include feeling “crabby”, not sleeping well, feeling anxious, and having little appetite.
- Chance of becoming addicted.

Safety rules for cannabis use – You must:

- Not use if pregnant or breastfeeding
- Tell your provider about any changes in physical or mental health and any changes to medicines
- Keep cannabis products in a safe place away from children, teens, and pets.
- Not share cannabis products or give them to anyone else.
- Not drive or operate heavy machinery within 8 hours of taking cannabis.