

Cannatrek®

Medicinal Cannabis Patient Information



This information is intended for patients prescribed medicinal cannabis in Australia.

This information does not replace guidance from your healthcare professional. If you have any questions about your condition or its treatment, please speak to your healthcare professional.

Also read the Consumer Medical Information which is supplied with your medicinal cannabis product.

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What is medicinal cannabis?

Unlike illegally grown and sold cannabis, medicinal cannabis is prescribed by your doctor and is subject to extensive testing.

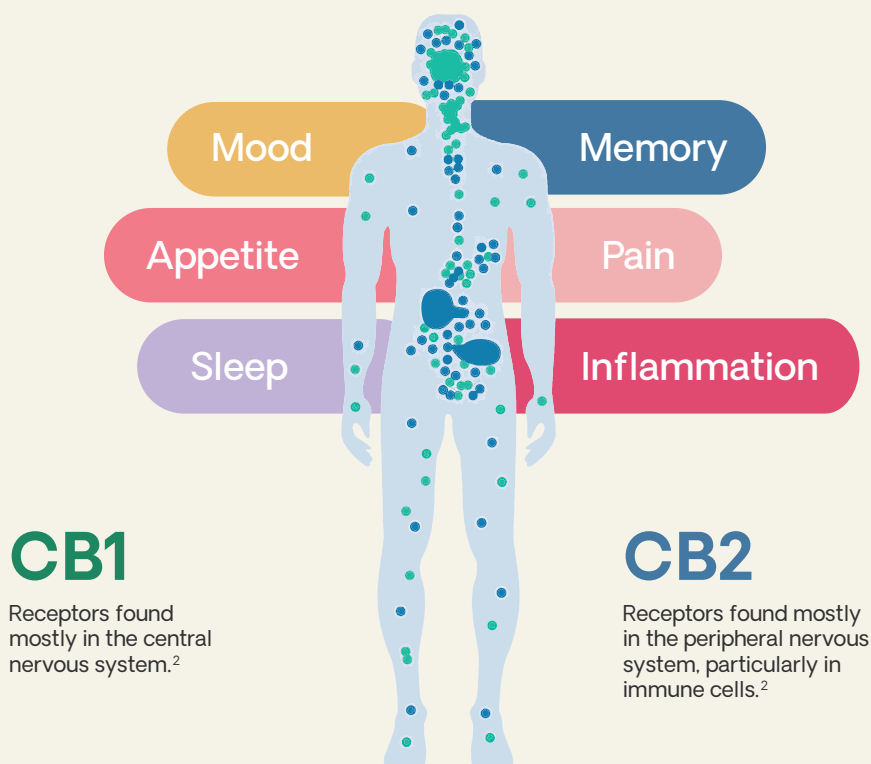
Medicinal cannabis is grown and processed in carefully and expertly controlled environments.¹ This means the dosage and components are consistent, predictable and controlled – ensuring a consistent patient experience.¹

Medicinal cannabis is subject to strict quality and safety standards which ensure that only trace amounts of contaminants are tolerated, unlike illegal cannabis.



How does medicinal cannabis work?

To understand how medicinal cannabis works, we need to understand a little about the endocannabinoid system.² This system regulates a range of functions in the body, including (but not limited to):²



The endocannabinoid system contributes to homeostasis, which refers to stability of your internal environment.² For example, if pain from an injury or a fever disrupts your body's homeostasis, the endocannabinoid system kicks in to help your body return to its stable state.²

The endocannabinoid system is made up of three main components: ²

- Endocannabinoids (molecules made by your body)
- Receptors (found throughout the body – primarily CB1 and CB2 receptors)
- Enzymes (responsible for breaking down endocannabinoids once they've carried out their function)

Medicinal cannabis contains chemicals called phytocannabinoids.¹

Phytocannabinoids (commonly referred to as 'cannabinoids') act on receptors throughout the body, mimicking naturally occurring endocannabinoids.¹

The cannabis plant contains over 100 cannabinoids. Two of the most common cannabinoids used in medicinal cannabis are: ¹

- THC (tetrahydrocannabinol)
- CBD (cannabidiol)

Medicinal cannabis products may contain THC only, CBD only or various ratios of CBD to THC. ^{3,4}

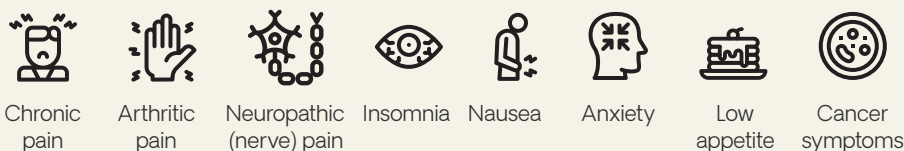


What is the difference between THC and CBD?

THC

THC is psychoactive meaning it is the compound that is associated with intoxicating effects at higher doses.³ It is the reason cannabis is used recreationally.⁴

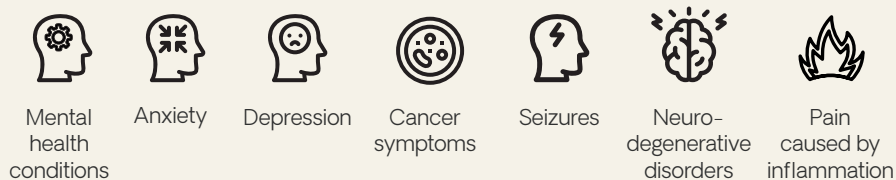
THC interacts with the endocannabinoid system by binding to CB1 and CB2 receptors.² This leads to a range of effects on both the brain and the body.² As a result, THC may be used to assist in the management of:^{3,4}



CBD

Unlike THC, CBD is not psychoactive, so it cannot get you 'high'.²

Researchers believe CBD prolongs the breakdown of endocannabinoids.² This allows them to have more of an effect on the body.² As a result, CBD may be used to assist in the management of:^{3,4}



Medicinal cannabis is not considered to be a 'first line' treatment for any health condition.¹ It should only be considered as a treatment if standard approved treatments have not worked effectively, or if unwanted side effects from standard approved treatments are undesirable for a patient.¹

How is medicinal cannabis taken?

Medicinal cannabis products can be taken in several ways:¹

By swallowing:¹



Oils



Liquid capsules and tablets



Time to onset:
30-90 minutes

Peak effect:
2-4 hours

It is important to wait at least 3 hours before taking another dose to avoid accidental overdose.

Swallowing medicinal cannabis is best for longer term relief.

By inhaling:¹

Medicinal cannabis inhalers produce no smoke, no vapor, and no smell. Unlike smoking or vaporisation, inhalers produce no heat, which preserves the terpene and cannabinoid content in its purest form.

Vaporising heats the medicinal cannabis without burning it and releases the cannabinoids and other chemicals in the form of a vapour which is then inhaled.

Options for inhalation include:



Inhaler



Dried herb for smoking



Resin, concentrates and distillate for use with vaporising cartridges



Time to onset:
90 seconds

Peak effect:
15-30 minutes

It is important to use vaporising cartridges that are indicated for therapeutic use.

Inhaling medicinal cannabis is best for fast-acting, short-term relief.

Does medicinal cannabis have any side effects?

All medicines can have side effects. If you do experience any side effects, most of them are minor and temporary. However, some side effects may need medical attention.

Side effects can vary with the type of medicinal cannabis product and between individuals.⁴ In general, the side effects of CBD-rich products are less than those for high-THC products.⁴

Side effects with medicinal cannabis treatment (both CBD and THC) include:⁴

- Fatigue and sedation, vertigo, nausea and vomiting, fever, decreased or increased appetite, dry mouth, and diarrhoea.

Side effects specifically associated with THC include:⁴

- Convulsions, feeling high or feeling dissatisfied, depression, confusion, hallucinations, paranoid delusions, psychosis, and cognitive distortion (having thoughts that are not true).

Other side effects not listed here may also occur. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you have any further questions about side effects.

Call your doctor straight away if you feel unwell or experience any side effects that worry you while using medicinal cannabis.





Driving or operating machinery

You should not drive or operate machinery while being treated with medicinal cannabis which contains THC.⁴ Measurable concentrations of THC can be detected in urine many days after the last dose.⁴ It may take up to five days for 80–90% of the dose to be excreted.⁴

Drug-driving is a criminal offence, and you should discuss the implications for safe and legal driving with your doctor.⁴



Overseas travel

As medicinal cannabis is a controlled substance, the legality of its use and transport may differ between countries. As such, you should contact the Embassy or Consulate of the country or countries that you intend to visit for information on whether you may take your medicinal cannabis.



Looking after your medicine

Store upright in a cool dry place at less than 25°C away from moisture, heat or sunlight; for example, **do not** store it:

- in the bathroom or near a sink, or
- in the car or on window sills.

Keep it where young children cannot reach it.



Interactions with other medicines

Some medicines may interfere with medicinal cannabis and affect how it works.

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any other medicines, including any medicines, vitamins or supplements that you buy without a prescription from your pharmacy, supermarket or health food shop.



If you think that you have used too much medicinal cannabis, you may need urgent medical attention.

You should immediately:

- phone the Poisons Information Centre (**by calling 13 11 26**), or
- contact your doctor, or
- go to the Emergency Department at your nearest hospital.

You should do this even if there are no signs of discomfort or poisoning.

Medicinal cannabis dosing

Start Low. Go Slow.

Your doctor will tell you how much medicinal cannabis to take each day and how many times a day you should take it. **Follow the instructions provided and keep using it until your doctor tells you to stop.**

To find the ideal dosage for you, it is highly recommended to begin at the lowest possible dose and increase slowly over time.⁴ This will allow you to achieve the best relief, while minimising any side effects of treatment.⁴

You can fill out the table below with your doctor to help guide daily dosages over the first few weeks of treatment.

	Morning dose	Evening dose
Week 1		
Week 2		
Week 3		
Week 4		
Week 5		
Week 6		
Week 7		
Week 8		
Week 9		
Week 10		

What is the prescribing process for medicinal cannabis?

If you're interested in exploring whether medicinal cannabis may be helpful in treating your symptoms and/or conditions, the first step is to get in contact with your regular doctor.

They can make an expert decision on whether medicinal cannabis may be a treatment option for you. Keep in mind that some doctors might not yet have experience in treating patients with medicinal cannabis.

If your doctor needs assistance learning about and prescribing medicinal cannabis, they can contact Cannatrek by calling 1300 122 662 or emailing customer@cannatrek.com

The Process

1. Referral (optional)

If your regular doctor prefers, they can refer you to another doctor who has experience prescribing medicinal cannabis (get a referral and/or health summary from your usual doctor to start this process).

2. Consultation

Discuss your health, needs and options with your doctor or the doctor you have been referred to (in person or via telehealth).

3. Application

Your doctor applies to the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) on your behalf.

4. Approval

This typically happens within 48 hours.

5. Prescription

The doctor writes you a prescription that can be taken to any pharmacy.

6. Delivery

The pharmacy delivers product(s) to you.

7. Follow-up

Visit your doctor for regular monitoring and repeat prescriptions as required.

References

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2. Healthline. A Simple Guide to the Endocannabinoid System. Available at: <https://www.healthline.com/health-news/cannabis-use-can-increase-your-susceptibility-to-false-memories>. Accessed July 2023.
3. Arnold JC *et al.* *Aust Prescr* 2020;43:152–9.
4. Australian Government. Department of Health. Therapeutic Goods Administration. Guidance for the use of medicinal cannabis in Australia. Patient information. Version 1, December 2017.



For more information, visit
cannatrek.com



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