

MS Essentials Tips



CANNABIS AND MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Using Cannabis

Cannabis may be used to relieve MS symptoms. It is not a disease-modifying therapy, so it will not have an impact on relapses or the MS disease process. **Cannabis should not be used as a substitute for the MS medication that your doctor has prescribed.** If you do decide to try cannabis, do not stop taking your disease-modifying therapy.

Potential benefits

- May relieve muscle stiffness (spasticity)
- May relieve nerve pain
- May relieve chronic pain
- May help you sleep
- May improve mood

Potential harms

- May worsen MS symptoms, such as balance and muscle weakness
- May impair cognitive function, such as thinking/ planning, memory, learning and ability to focus
- May induce or worsen psychiatric symptoms, such as anxiety, depression, distorted thoughts and paranoia
- Has many of the same health risks as tobacco if smoked
- Risk of addiction (about 5%)

DO NOT USE CANNABIS if you:

- Are pregnant or breast-feeding
- Have a history of psychiatric illness
- Have a history of substance abuse

Practical Tips

- Start with a low amount of cannabis
- Choose a product with a low THC content and an equal or higher amount of CBD
- Do not combine with alcohol
- Avoid frequent or heavy use
- Do not drive or work while impaired
- Keep cannabis away from children
- Inform your doctor and MS nurse if you are using cannabis.

For more information on the medical use of cannabis, see the Health Canada website:

https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-medication/cannabis/medical-use-cannabis.html#_Access_to_cannabis

For a list of licensed vendors by province/territory, go to:

www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-medication/cannabis/laws-regulations/provinces-territories.html