

Medical Cannabis: A Practical Guide for Patients and Caregivers

Introduction

This page is for patients, caregivers, and families who are curious about medical cannabis and want clear, responsible information. It does not replace medical advice. Always talk with a licensed healthcare professional before starting, changing, or stopping any treatment, including cannabis.

Laws, regulations, and medical guidelines around cannabis change frequently and vary by state. The information here is meant as a general guide so you can ask better questions, advocate for yourself or your loved one, and make informed decisions with your care team.

What is medical cannabis?

Medical cannabis refers to the use of the cannabis plant or its components, such as THC and CBD, to help manage specific health conditions and symptoms under the guidance of a healthcare professional. It can come in many forms, including balms, gummies, tinctures, capsules, oils, and, in some places, inhaled products.

Documented and commonly recognized medical uses

- Chronic pain and neuropathic pain
- Chemotherapy-related nausea and vomiting
- Appetite loss and weight loss
- Seizure disorders
- Muscle spasticity
- Sleep disturbances

Conditions with limited or mixed evidence

- Anxiety
- Depression
- PTSD
- Insomnia
- General stress

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Forms of medical cannabis

- Topicals
- Edibles
- Tinctures/oils
- Inhaled forms

Safety, risks, and side effects

- Cognitive effects
- Mood changes
- Physical effects
- Dependence potential
- Medication interactions

Is medical cannabis legal in my state?

Medical cannabis laws vary widely. Always check your state's official government website or department of health for the most accurate information.

How to seek professional medical help

1. Talk to your current provider
2. Consider a medical cannabis specialist

How to apply for a medical marijuana card

1. Confirm eligibility
2. Obtain a written certification
3. Submit your application
4. Receive your card

Using a medical cannabis card safely

- Purchase only from licensed dispensaries

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- Follow dosing guidance
- Store products safely
- Know possession and travel laws

How to decide if medical cannabis is right for you

Consider symptoms, past treatments, risks, interactions, and product types.

Important disclaimer

This guide is for educational purposes only. It is not medical or legal advice. Always consult licensed professionals and verify your state's current laws.