

Cannabis for Seniors

With legalization sweeping the world, seniors are exploring medical cannabis more than ever before. Several of the conditions seniors suffer from are also conditions for which cannabis is known to be effective: arthritis, neurodegenerative diseases, pain, depression, cancer & the side effects of chemotherapy/radiation, insomnia, low appetite, glaucoma, menopause, anxiety, fear, brittle bones, end-of-life care and more. However, there is still much stigmatization against this plant and it's important to access proper education to avoid unwanted side effects and receive the most effective benefits.

THC and CBD are the two most popular cannabinoids found in the cannabis plant, though there are many, many more that are currently being researched and have many beneficial effects on the body.

CBD supports the immune system, promotes bone growth and is an antioxidant, antipsychotic and anticonvulsant. CBD does not impair cognitive abilities, it may even enhance them by increasing energy, focus and memory. THC improves sleep with its sedating effects, relieves stress and improves appetite. THC can impair cognitive abilities and at higher doses can cause a high, stoned or euphoric effect. Many seniors do NOT want this intoxicating effect and in fact, may experience anxiety just thinking about it. Low doses of THC, especially when accompanied with CBD, greatly reduces the occurrence of impairment. CBD and THC have many benefits in common, including analgesic properties, anxiety reduction, antidepressant, anti-inflammatory, and muscle-relaxing properties. The synergistic effects of these two cannabinoids are enhanced when they are combined.

There are some situations where avoiding THC may be warranted; for example, if you are taking a pharmaceutical that may interact with THC, if you are subjected to regular drug testing or if you have a family history of psychosis, schizophrenia, or bipolar disorder. Otherwise,



therapeutic use of both THC and CBD can be done safely and effectively.

While cannabis does have side effects, most dissipate over time or can be remediated through dose adjustment. THC side effects include: paranoia and anxiety, dry mouth, dry eyes, hunger, sleepiness, short-term memory loss, racing heart, blood pressure may decrease due to vasodilation. CBD is found to be quite safe with very few side effects including: diarrhea, dizziness, sleepiness, reduced appetite.

Be aware of any interactions with any pharmaceuticals that you may be taking, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or cannabis coach.

When you begin working with cannabis, remember the motto to "Start Low and Go Slow". Begin with EXTREMELY small doses of THC (1-2mg) and CBD (2.5-5mg) slowly add more until you feel relief.



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