



## **Cannabis Quick Facts** (Adults and Seniors)

**WARNING Cannabis (marijuana) use before the age of 26 may increase the risk of developing mental health disorders and can permanently alter brain development** (Minnesota Psychiatric Society 2019).

### Cardiovascular risks

Recent studies have shown a rising trend of adult cannabis users under the age of 50 suffering from heart attack and stroke. (Sandhyavenu H. et al. Cardiovascular Risk and Prev. 2023) (Desai R. et al. Int J Stroke 2020). Cannabis use is associated with an increased risk of developing atrial fibrillation, a common heart rhythm abnormality (Lin AL et.al. Eur Heart J. 2022).

### IQ loss

Middle age cannabis users with at least weekly cannabis use showed a mean 5.5-point IQ decline compared to their childhood IQ and smaller hippocampal brain volume (Meier et. al. Am. J. of Psychiatry 2022).

### Driving impairment

People who consume cannabis edibles should not drive for 8 hours after use. Longer waiting periods may be required if cannabis edibles are eaten with a meal. (Schlienz et. al. Drug Alcohol Depend. 2020). Inhaled cannabis also impairs driving for extended periods of time (Spindle et. al. J Psychopharmacol 2021).

### Adverse effects

The most common side-effects of cannabis are respiratory symptoms, alterations in blood pressure, dizziness, nausea, sleepiness, intoxication, memory problems, and interaction with prescription drugs (Khoury et al. Clinics in Geriatric Medicine 2022). Cannabis smoke contains carcinogenic chemicals and is not safer to inhale than cigarette smoke (NIDA website 2023). High potency and high frequency of cannabis use are associated with the most severe short term and long-term harms (learnaboutsam.org).

### Association with schizophrenia and depression

Twenty to 30% of schizophrenia cases among young adult males might be prevented by avoiding cannabis use disorder (Hjorthøj, C., et al. Psychological Medicine 2023). Evidence suggests a harmful influence of cannabis on the course of depression (Lowe DJE, et. al. Eur Arch Psychiatry Clin Neurosci. 2019).

### Cannabis Use Disorder (Addiction)

In a study of primary care patients living in a recreational cannabis state, cannabis use disorder prevalence was 21% among adult patients who used cannabis and did not vary between medical and non-medical cannabis user groups (Lapham GT et al. JAMA Netw Open 2023). Near daily use of cannabis over an extended period, regardless of dose, leads to cannabis use disorder in up to 50% of users (Callaghan et. al. Drug Alcohol Depend. 2020).

### Cannabis and chronic non-cancer pain

International pain experts give a weak recommendation for a non-inhaled pharmaceutical cannabis trial if standard evidence-based therapies fail (Wang L. et. al. BMJ 2021). Placebo effect contributes significantly to pain reduction seen in cannabis clinical trials (Gedin et.al. JAMA Netw Open. 2022).

### Cannabis and sleep

There is no clear evidence that cannabis helps with sleep. Short-term benefits may be noted but tolerance develops over time. A common symptom of cannabis withdrawal is insomnia (Lavender I. et. al. Chest 2022).

### Fall risk

Older chronic cannabis users have a greater risk of falling compared to older non- users (Workman CD et. al. Brain Sci. 2021).

### Cannabis and pregnancy

Prenatal cannabis use increases the likelihood of preterm birth, low birth weight, small-for-gestational age, and major birth defects (Luke S. et. al. PLoS One 2022). ACOG recommends that women who are pregnant, planning to get pregnant, or breast-feeding not use cannabis.

### Regulatory status

State-regulated cannabis has not been approved by the FDA to prevent, diagnose, treat, or cure any disease. Use of state-regulated cannabis is experimental. Marketing cannabis as a dietary supplement or a therapeutic product is a violation of federal regulation (<https://www.fda.gov>).

### Cannabidiol (CBD) safety concerns

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has expressed safety concerns about CBD especially with long-term use. Studies have shown the potential for liver injury, interactions with certain medications, and possible harm to the male reproductive system and the developing fetus. (Janet Woodcock, M.D. Office of the Commissioner. January 26, 2023)