

CBD (Cannabidiol) – Frequently Asked Questions

What is CBD?

Cannabidiol, often referred to as CBD, is one of hundreds of naturally occurring cannabinoids (compounds) found in the cannabis (marijuana/ hemp) plant. CBD is not psychoactive and does not cause a user to feel 'high'. THC is the cannabinoid that is psychoactive and causes a user to feel 'high'.¹

Have any CBD products been approved by the FDA?

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved Epidiolex, a pharmaceutical grade of CBD, as an effective treatment for Dravet syndrome and Lennox-Gastaut syndrome, two rare forms of epilepsy. Epidiolex is prescribed by a physician.

There is another product, Sativex (combination of THC and CBD), that is currently undergoing FDA approval process.²

Is CBD legal?

The Farm Act was signed December 2018 and federally removed hemp from its Schedule I status. Hemp must have less than 0.3% THC by dry weight to be considered hemp. The Act makes CBD derived from hemp legal in all 50 states if and only if that hemp is produced in a manner consistent with the Farm Act, associated federal regulations typically from the FDA, associated state regulations, and by a licensed grower.

The Florida legislature approved Senate Bill (SB) 1020 that allows the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to create a state hemp program. As of July 1, 2019, SB 1020 allows the Florida Department of Agriculture to regulate hemp and hemp products (including CBD).^{2,3}

What about all the online and over-the-counter CBD products, are they safe?

Over-the-counter and online CBD products have not been approved by the FDA. Many CBD companies advertise unproven and misleading health claims. The FDA has sent warning letters to companies who make claims about online or over-the-counter CBD products without proper research and approval. These products were not approved by the FDA for the diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment, or prevention of any disease.

Consumers should beware of purchasing and using any such products. Much more research needs to be conducted.⁴

Do CBD products contain THC?

The FDA has tested the chemical content of cannabinoid compounds in some of the over-the-counter and online products and found that many did not contain the levels of CBD they claimed to contain. Research suggests that CBD products often have more THC than claimed. For example, a study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association in 2017 found that 18 of 84 CBD products, all purchased online, had THC levels possibly high enough to cause intoxication or impairment (up to 6.43 mg/ml). And those elevated levels might also be high enough to cause a consumer to fail a drug test.^{5,6}

Does CBD interact with other medications?

What are the drug interactions associated with CBD?

CBD is a potent inhibitor of several liver enzymes (CYP3A4 and CYP2D6) that metabolize about a quarter of all drugs, and may increase concentrations of calcium channel blockers, benzodiazepines, cyclosporine, antihistamines, haloperidol, antiretrovirals, opioids, and some statins, as well as antidepressants including Selective Serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), tricyclic antidepressants and antipsychotics.⁷

Are there side effects from using CBD?

Some research indicates that the use of CBD oil may trigger a number of side effects, including: anxiety, changes in appetite, changes in mood, diarrhea, dizziness, drowsiness, dry mouth, nausea, vomiting. There is also some concern that the use of CBD oil may lead to increased levels of liver enzymes (a marker of liver damage or inflammation).⁸

Is CBD safe for my pets?

CBD has not been proven to be safe or effective for treatment of animals. One area of concern is that recent reports of lab analyses indicate that a substantial portion of products currently available on the market are labeled inaccurately. Some CBD products contain THC which can be toxic for pets.⁹

References:

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This resource was developed by the FADAA Prevention Committee. The committee is comprised of prevention professionals from around the state and meets once a month to identify emerging trends, best practices and other topics of interest for those working in the prevention of substance use disorders. This information is provided in good faith solely for informational purposes and does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association, or the Florida Behavioral Health Association. This information is not intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.