



Medical Marijuana

Understanding therapeutic cannabis

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Introduction:

Medical marijuana (also called therapeutic cannabis or therapeutic marijuana) refers to *Cannabis sativa* (botanical designation of hemp), and by extension to dozens of **phyto-cannabinoids used for purely medical purpose.**

Cannabinoids are a group of chemicals that activate cannabis receptors found in



the human body and in mammals. Cannabidiol (CBD) is a cannabinoid found in cannabis. It is the second most studied cannabinoid after THC. **These two molecules have many**

common effects and potentiate the actions of each other. Despite some undesirable effects, the medicinal properties of these molecules are no longer to prove and are **increasingly studied and used nowadays.**

Given the evolution of scientific knowledge in the field of cannabinoids, the medical use of marijuana is becoming more and more tolerated, even legal, in a growing number of countries: Canada, Australia, Netherlands, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Italy, the Czech Republic, Romania, Finland, Chile, Colombia, Israel **and the United States in 23 states.**



However, this use must require either a prescription or a confirmation of medical diagnosis.

The use of medical marijuana became legal in Nevada in 2001, and state-certified medical marijuana establishments, like dispensaries, became operational in 2015.



Patients meeting certain criteria can apply for a Nevada medical marijuana card. The medical marijuana card allows the patient to legally purchase marijuana from a state-certified medical marijuana dispensary. The legalization of retail marijuana does not change the medical marijuana program.

The Nevada Medical Marijuana Program is governed by [Nevada Revised Statute 53A](#) and [Nevada Administrative Code 453A](#).

Historical use:

The history of the therapeutic use of cannabinoids is difficult to trace, in particular because the laws regulating its production,



distribution, possession and consumption are relatively recent. The distinction between medical and recreational use makes this task even harder.

However, **cannabinoids were already used for medical purpose in ancient Egypt**, as well as in the Chinese civilization around 1500 BC, especially to treat **vomiting, parasitic infectious diseases and hemorrhages**.

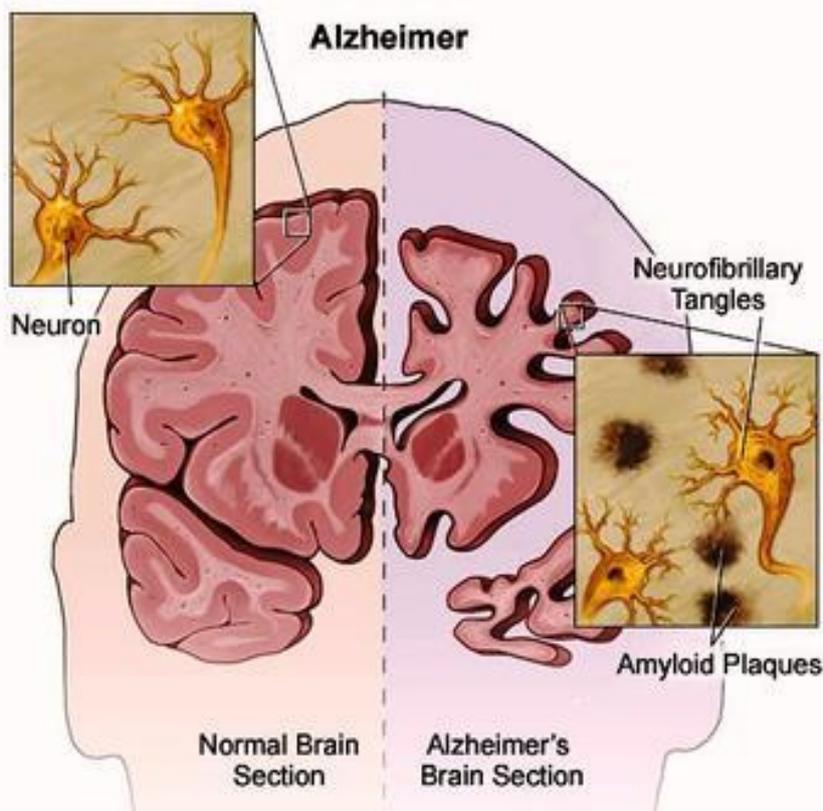
Numerous articles on different cannabis species were published in Europe and North America during the second half of the nineteenth century. The therapeutic use of CBD was common in the United States before 1930. **It is generally prescribed as an analgesic, sedative, antispasmodic or antiemetic.**

Since the 1990s, cannabinoids are attracting growing interest from research laboratories. Between 2000 and 2007, more than 9,000 scientific articles were published. This number has more than doubled in ten years. **Thus, these studies,**



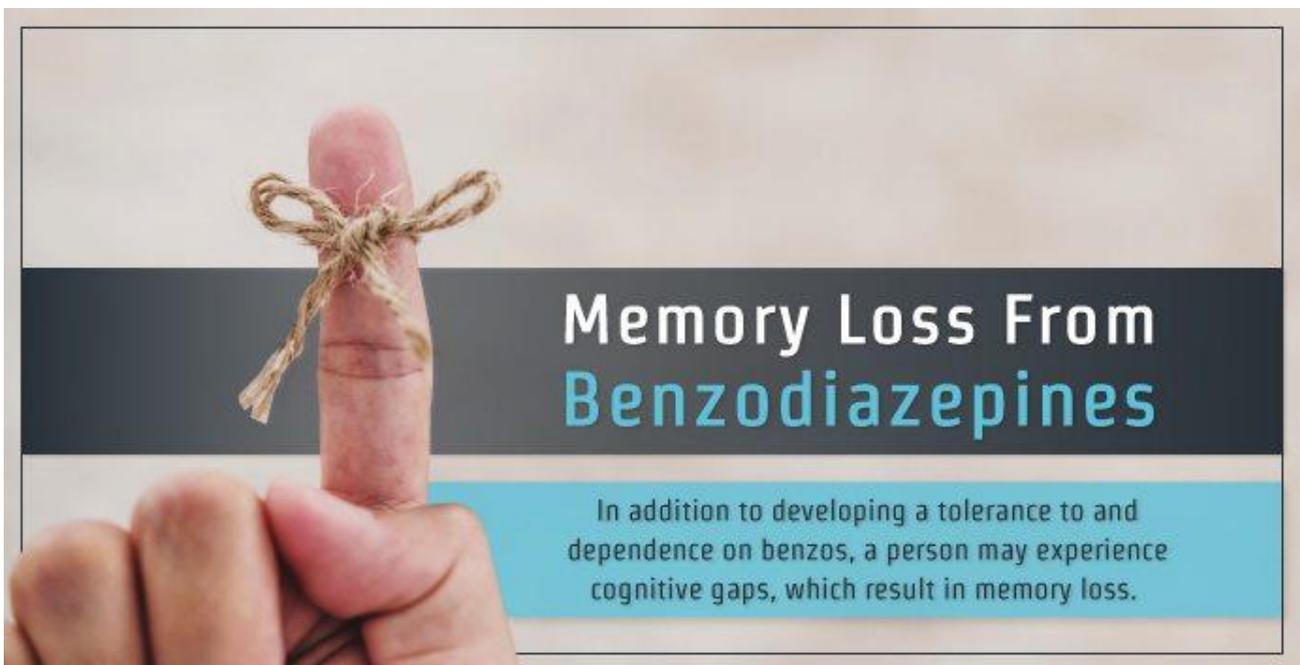
listed on the IACM21 scientific database, suggest that cannabis could be used for therapeutic purposes in a wide variety of diseases and conditions:

- **An effective alternative for the treatment of chronic symptoms** (impulsivity, anxiety, distractibility, etc.) of Attention-Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) (by modulation of dopamine by the [endocannabinoid](#) system).
- An effective alternative for [refractory cholestatic pruritus](#);
- A therapeutic agent against neurodegenerative diseases and dystonia (disruption of muscle tone).
- Used for the treatment of **Parkinson's disease**.
- For the reduction of tics associated with [Tourette's syndrome](#).



- For the treatment of autoimmune diseases such as **multiple sclerosis**.
- **Used as an anti-proliferative agent:** remission of cancerous tumors to the brain (as well as slowing the progression of certain cancers of the lung, breast and leukemia);

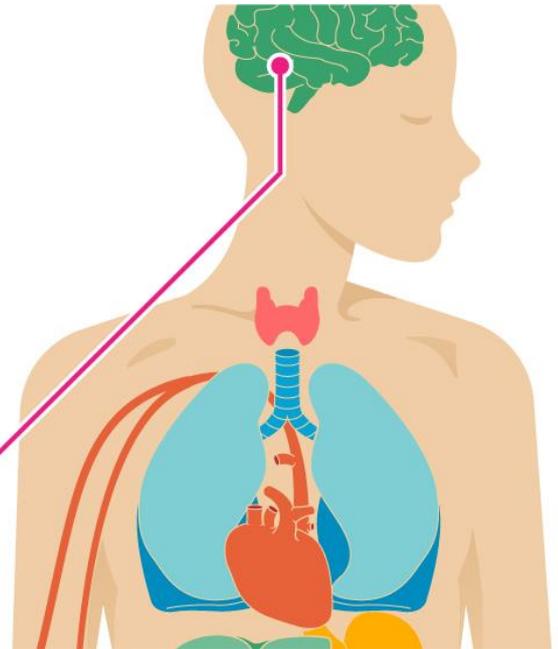
- **An effective agent that inhibits gastric acid secretions** and may play a favorable role in the prevention of **ulcers and diarrhea**;
- **Used in behavioral problems in patients with Alzheimer's disease or autism**; Indeed, **cannabinoids limit the formation of amyloid plaques** in the brain by inhibiting an enzyme responsible for their formation. These amyloid plaques are related to patient symptoms and the destruction of neurons.
- **An important alternative for the treatment of transient or chronic depression** (cannabinoids allow a modulation of serotonin secretion, and therefore have many significant effects on mood disorders, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder).
- **Used as a treatment of sleep disorders and anxiety**;
- **Cannabinoids are also used as a substitution agent** for the treatment of addictions to alcohol, opiates (heroin), stimulants (cocaine) and sleeping pills (Benzodiazepine).



Side effects:

Cannabinoids (especially CBD and THC) can however cause many side effects (acute or delayed).

The Effects Of **Marijuana** ON YOUR BODY



These effects vary depending on individuals, the amount absorbed as well as the composition of the product, the acute symptoms may be different:

- Increase or decrease **in heart rate** (high palpitations of the heart),
- The appearance **of red eyes** (increased conjunctiva blood activity),
- **Dry mouth** (decreased salivary secretion),
- Feeling of **nausea** (sometimes leading to vomiting).

Other adverse effects are delayed and often related to a significant consumption over a long period such as:

- **Problems of concentration, memory and character.**
- Triggering **schizophrenia** in predisposed persons.
- The risk **of sexual impotence** in case of a prolonged and excessive consumption.

- Dependence: **The dependence related to cannabinoids is more behavioral than organic.** The withdrawal syndrome is less important than for other addictive substances such as alcohol, cocaine or heroin.

Conclusion:

THC and Cannabidiol (CBD) are molecules that belong to the cannabinoids family. They have many effects on the human body. **Nowadays, their medical properties are no longer to prove,** this justifies the fact that they are allowed in more and more countries.

However, **regulation and monitoring of consumption by a qualified physician is essential to benefit from these molecules** without incurring the dangers associated with their consumption.



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