

IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ

INFORMATION FOR THE PATIENT

Marihuana (Cannabis)

This leaflet is published by Health Canada for patients who have been authorized by Health Canada to possess dried marihuana.

This leaflet is designed for patients based on the document *Information for Health Care Professionals* on dried marihuana published by Health Canada. The information in this leaflet is derived from published literature. It is a summary only and will not tell you everything about marihuana. Contact your doctor if you have any questions.

Marihuana is not an approved therapeutic product and the provision of this information should not be interpreted as an endorsement of the use of this product, or marihuana generally, by Health Canada.

Since this marihuana product has not been authorized through the Health Canada drug approval process, its safety and efficacy have not been established.

The use of this product involves risks to health, some of which may not be known or fully understood.

ABOUT THIS PRODUCT

What it does:

- Consuming marihuana often produces euphoria, relaxation, time-distortion, perception of enhanced sensory experiences, and loss of inhibitions.

What the active ingredients might be:

- Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)
- Cannabinol
- Cannabidiol

What the other ingredients might be:

- There may be more than 60 other cannabinoids.
- Many of the substances found in tobacco smoke have been found in marihuana smoke as well.

How this product is supplied:

- Dried marihuana plant material.

WARNINGS

BEFORE YOU USE MARIHUANA ALWAYS TALK TO YOUR PHYSICIAN PARTICULARLY IF:

- You have heart disease.
- You have asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or other disease of the airways.
- You have a history of alcohol abuse or dependence.
- You have a history of drug abuse or dependence.
- You have a history of a serious mental disorder

WHEN THIS PRODUCT SHOULD NOT BE USED:

- If you are allergic to any cannabinoid or to smoking.
- If you have a history of serious mental disorder such as schizophrenia or depression.
- If you are pregnant or planning to get pregnant. In addition to the risk of smoking, the use of marihuana when you are pregnant may be a risk factor for sudden infant death syndrome. Uterine exposure to marihuana may also cause behavioural (attention) problems in the child.
- If you are nursing.
- **There may be other conditions where this product should not be used but which are unknown due to limited scientific information.**

ADMINISTRATION OF MARIHUANA BY SMOKING IS NOT RECOMMENDED.

MARIHUANA MAY IMPAIR YOUR ABILITY TO DRIVE OR OPERATE HEAVY MACHINERY.

- This can last up to 24 hours after consuming.

PRECAUTIONS

- If you have not consumed marihuana before, it would be prudent to have someone with you the first time you use it. It is important to start by using it slowly. Stop if you begin to feel confused or agitated.
- After you stop using marihuana, it remains in your system for several weeks. Therefore, during this time, tests that screen for marihuana may be positive.

INTERACTIONS WITH THIS PRODUCT

Marihuana may interact with several drugs. Tell your doctor which prescription drugs, nonprescription drugs and herbal products you are currently taking, particularly:

- Any drugs that slow down the central nervous system, causing drowsiness. This may include sleeping pills, tranquilizers, some pain medications, some antihistamines or cold medications or seizure medications.
- Antiviral drugs used in the treatment of AIDS.

USE

Smoking is not recommended. Some individuals use marihuana in foods, teas or with a vaporiser.

Begin with small amounts; increase the amount of marihuana slowly.

Stop consuming if you begin to feel confused or agitated, light headed, dizzy, or if a rapid heart rate occurs. Sit down until the feeling passes.

Usual Dose:

The dose of marihuana will be different for each person. If you haven't used marihuana or this product before, you should start with a small dose and increase it slowly until you reach a comfortable daily dose. Your doctor will determine your initial dose.

Overdose:

Symptoms of overdose are sleepiness, confusion, clumsiness, fainting, dizziness, dry mouth and fast, slow or pounding heartbeat. These are the same effects that are often experienced when you start using marihuana. If they persist or are troublesome, call your doctor or go to the hospital.

SIDE EFFECTS

From Initial Use:

- When you first start consuming marihuana, you may experience mood reactions such as anxiety, paranoia, agitation, amnesia, delusions or hallucinations. If this happens stop consuming marihuana immediately.
- Fast heartbeat; this may be more of a problem if you have heart disease
- Facial flushing or red eyes.

- Right after consuming marihuana, you may get dizzy or feel faint when you get up from a lying or sitting position. Try getting up more slowly. If lying down sit on the edge of the bed and let your feet dangle for 1 to 2 minutes, then stand up slowly.

From Long-term use:

- Wheezing or a chronic cough, if the product is smoked.
- May impair short-term memory attention and concentration. These effects continue after you stop using marihuana and increase with longer periods of use.

HOW TO STORE IT

Store in a cool, safe and secure place.

KEEP THIS PRODUCT OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN

REPORTING SUSPECTED SIDE EFFECTS

NOTE: Before contacting Health Canada, you should contact your physician.

To monitor drug safety, Health Canada collects information on serious and unexpected effects of drugs. If you suspect you have a serious or unexpected reaction to this product you may notify Health Canada by:

Toll-free telephone: 866-234-2345
Toll-free fax: 866-678-6789
By email: cadrmrp@hc-sc.gc.ca

By regular mail:
Canadian Adverse Drug Reaction Monitoring Program (CADRMP)
Health Canada
Address Locator: 0201C2
Ottawa, ON K1A 1B9

MORE INFORMATION

This document plus the full information document for health care professionals can be found at:
<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hecs-sesc/ocma/index.htm>

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