

MEDICAL MARIJUANA

Marijuana or Cannabis has been used for over 3,000 years for health problems. The term *medical marijuana* refers to using the whole, unprocessed marijuana plant or its extracts to treat symptoms of illness. For basic information on what medical marijuana is and how it is used, go to www.cdc.gov/marijuana/faqs.



Is Medical Marijuana legal?

It has been legalized in 23 states because of decisions made by voters or legislators—not because of scientific evidence of its benefits. On Friday, June 23, 2017, Florida Governor, Rick Scott signed to implement the medical marijuana amendment that 71% of voters approved last year. This amendment took effect on Jan.3 and required that laws had to be in place by July 3 for how patients can qualify and receive the drug. The bill still bans smoking marijuana.

What can Medical Marijuana be used for?

In the State of Florida, the new law approved it to be used in the following diseases: HIV and AIDS, glaucoma, post-traumatic stress disorder, ALS, Crohn's disease, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis in addition to those previously approved including epilepsy, chronic muscle spasms, cancer and terminal conditions. For specific information regarding the implementation, go to (<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/florida/articles/2017-06-23/florida-governor-signs-medical-marijuana-legislation>). The law also allows more medical marijuana treatment centers to be created.

Has the FDA approved Medical Marijuana?

No. The FDA has not found any evidence of the health benefits as it has not studied it on a large scale as other medications and drugs. The FDA requires research on thousands of people to study the effects of drugs before they are approved for use. All medications are 2-faced; there is the beneficial, therapeutic side and the adverse/toxic side. Studying the medications and testing on thousands of people is how the FDA determines if the benefit outweighs the risks, is it safe for human use and for what diseases. To date there are almost no approved medications that are used as a whole herb.

What is the delay with the FDA approving medical Marijuana?

Marijuana is one of many plants that contain substances that can be both beneficial and harmful, depending on how they are used. Using plants in the natural state gives unpredictable results as all plants contain hundreds to thousands of different chemicals.

Before the 20th century, medications consisted of whole plants or unpurified extracts. Fortunately, scientists can pick out the specific chemicals that are useful from plants, and place those in a pill, without all of the unwanted chemicals that may be toxic.

Currently, scientists are busy trying to figure out which chemicals in the marijuana plant really are useful in treating health problems and then finding ways to deliver them safely and effectively to patients to treat their conditions.

For example, there are two FDA-approved drugs, which were taken from a cannabinoid plant: **Marinol (dronabinol) and Cesamet (nabilone)** both contain THC. These drugs treat nausea caused by chemotherapy and increase appetite in patients with extreme weight loss caused by AIDS. **Epidiolex**, is a cannabinoid -based liquid drug to treat certain forms of childhood epilepsy, it is being tested in clinical trials but isn't yet FDA-approved.

For more Information:

nccih.nih.gov/health/marijuana

www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana-medicine

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