

Turn your back on the myths about medical cannabis



MYTH

T

“With a certain
THC or CBD dose,
everyone experiences
the same effects”



FACT



Dosing of THC and/or CBD should be **highly individual** between patients. Therefore, "start low and go slow" is the recommended dosing strategy for titrating medical cannabis.

When **starting at a low dose** and **slowly increasing it**, the optimal therapeutic dose for each patient can be determined. Therefore, symptoms control is achieved with least possible adverse effects¹.

Besides the THC and CBD dose, also **formulation** and **route of administration** (i.e. oral or by inhalation) and patient-specific characteristics like age, weight, comedication and comorbidities have an impact on the therapeutic effects^{2,3}.



MYTH

2

“There are no side effects when using medical cannabis”



FACT



Medical cannabis is considered as a **safe medication** with broad therapeutic range and low toxicity¹. However, like any other pharmacological therapy, medical cannabis may cause **adverse reactions**.

CBD is not psychoactive and generally well tolerated. Thus, adverse reactions are primarily **THC dose-dependent**, occurring mainly during the initial titration period. Often, they dissipate over time. Adverse reactions of medical cannabis can be reduced, with a low starting dose and slow titration. According to MacCallum et al., common adverse events include drowsiness/fatigue, dizziness, dry mouth, nausea, effects on cognitive function and deficits in motor function³.

The probability of adverse effects **varies among patients** and can be influenced – like the desired, therapeutic effects – by several factors such as route of administration, genetics, age, weight, comedication, comorbidities, gender, ethnicity, duration and frequency of medical cannabis use^{2,3,4}.



MYTH

3

“No matter where I travel to, medical cannabis prescribed by my doctor is always legal”



FACT

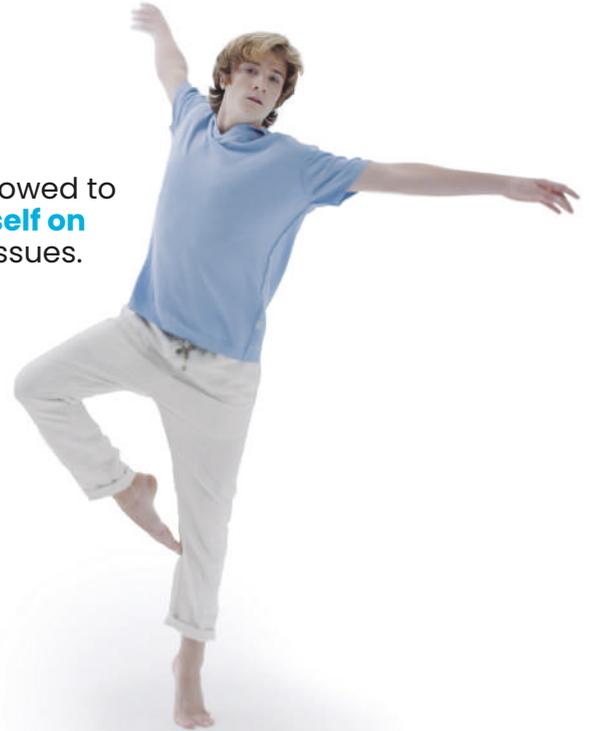


Unfortunately, the legal status of medical cannabis varies significantly by country. Each country has its **own legislation**, widely differing even within the EU.

Only some countries have authorised the medical use of cannabis, for example Germany or Czechia.

Before travelling abroad, please make sure that you are allowed to carry your medical cannabis with you. Please **inform yourself on the country's or region's specific laws** to avoid any legal issues.

In many countries it is required to carry **specific documents** that certify the medical purpose.



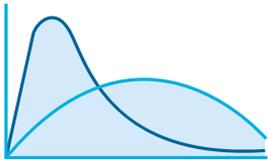
MYTH

4

“The administration of medical cannabis is always via smoking”



FACT

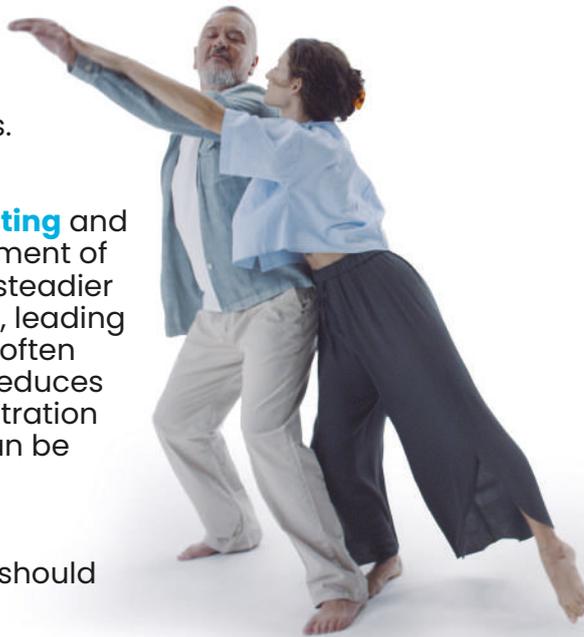


There are several routes of administration available for medical cannabis, with **oral** intake and **inhalation** being the most common ones³. For chronic conditions, the oral administration might be the most suitable.

Explore with us why: Compared to oral administration of a similar dose, the onset of action is **faster** by inhalation, the maximal therapeutic effect is **stronger** and the duration of action is **shorter**. This can be particularly advantageous when **acute symptoms** are to be managed, for example, a migraine attack or pain spikes.

In contrast, the oral administration enables a **longer lasting** and more **stable effect**, thus being appropriate for the treatment of chronic symptoms. The **slower onset** of action and the steadier blood concentration also improve the tolerability profile, leading to less side effects. Symptoms of overdosing occur less often which, together with the slower onset of action, clearly reduces the risk of addiction. Therefore, the oral route of administration is the therapy standard for chronic symptoms, which can be supplemented by inhalation if required^{1,5}.

Also, for inhalation, standardised full spectrum extracts should be preferred over flowers (see next myth).



MYTH

5

“The preferred formulation to administer medical cannabis are flowers”



FACT



Standardised full spectrum extracts should be preferred over flowers as **standardization** ensures exact THC/CBD concentrations, which in turn makes the therapeutic effect more **controllable** and **reproducible** and reduces the risk of overdosing.

Standardised pharmaceutical extracts guarantee high quality and manufacturing standards (e.g. via **GMP legislation**), thus avoiding impurities and the formation of noxious side products upon heating of raw plant material. Furthermore, grinding (milling) is not required with fluid extracts which makes the administration **more convenient** and rapid.

Also, particle size and other variability factors typical of flower inhalation do not apply to extracts inhalation¹.



MYTH

6

“Treatment with medical cannabis impairs cognitive function the same way as recreational use does”



FACT



Typically, patients treated with medical cannabis differ in age and pre-existing conditions from people using cannabis recreationally. Recreational use of cannabis usually begins during adolescence, in an essential phase of brain development. Many studies assessing **recreational cannabis** users have demonstrated that early cannabis onset is related to **poorer cognitive performance**.

Patients treated with medical cannabis are usually older at onset and often suffer from medical conditions that adversely impact cognitive performance, for example chronic pain, anxiety and sleep disorder^{6,7,8}. Consequently, cognitive functions of patients suffering from such conditions may improve when symptoms are managed successfully and patients feel better⁷.

Recent clinical studies support the assumption that treatment with **medical cannabis does not impair the cognitive function**. A cross-sectional study compared the cognitive performance of chronic pain patients aged 50+ who had a medical cannabis license with patients without license. The results did not show any significant difference between the two groups regarding cognitive performance⁹. In a 12-month longitudinal, observational study, patients using medical cannabis for various medical conditions exhibited improved executive function and stable verbal learning and memory within the context of improvements on measures of mood, anxiety, and sleep relative to baseline⁷. This may be explained also by the fact that medical cannabis patients prefer doses that provide **symptom relief without feelings of intoxication**, while recreational users typically choose products with considerable amounts of THC as they desire “high” or mood-altering effects⁷.



REFERENCES

1. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Schmerzmedizin. DGS-PraxisLeitlinien: Cannabis in der Schmerzmedizin. Version: 1.0 für Fachkreise, 2018.
2. Breijyeh Z, Jubeh B, Bufo SA, Karaman R, Scranio L. Cannabis: A Toxin-Producing Plant with Potential Therapeutic Uses. *Toxins* (Basel). 2021 Feb;13(2):117.
3. MacCallum CA, Lo LA, Boivin M. "Is medical cannabis safe for my patients?" A practical review of cannabis safety considerations. *Eur J Intern Med*. 2021 Jul;89:10-18.
4. Arnold, JC. A primer on medicinal cannabis safety and potential adverse effects. *Aust J Gen Pract*. 2021 Jun;50(6):345-350.
5. Grotenhermen F, Häußermann K. Cannabis: Verordnungshilfe für Ärzte. Wissenschaftliche Verlagsgesellschaft. 2019.
6. Casey BJ, Jones RM, Somerville LH. Braking and Accelerating of the Adolescent Brain. *J Res Adolesc*. 2011 Mar 1;21(1):21-33.
7. Sagar KA, Dahlgren MK, Lambros AM, Smith RT, El-Abboud C, Gruber SA. An Observational, Longitudinal Study of Cognition in Medical Cannabis Patients over the Course of 12 Months of Treatment: Preliminary Results. *J Int Neuropsychol Soc*. 2021 Jul;27(6):648-660.
8. Bundesinstitut für Arzneimittel und Medizinprodukte (BfArM). Cannabis als Medizin: Abschlussbericht zur Begleiterhebung (06.07.2022).
9. Sznitman SR, Vulfsons S, Meiri D, Weinstein G. Medical cannabis and cognitive performance in middle to old adults treated for chronic pain. *Drug Alcohol Rev*. 2021 Feb;40(2):272-280.

*If we turn our back on medical cannabis,
we turn our back on millions of patients.*

Neuraxpharm is fostering a *change for health* across society. We encourage healthcare professionals, patients and the general public to rethink their preconceptions about cannabis and embrace it as an effective, individualized treatment option. Through our medical cannabis portfolio we will contribute to relieve the suffering of millions of patients with unmet needs for a number of different diseases and symptoms, thus improving their quality of life.

WATCH OUR VIDEO



CHANGE FOR HEALTH

Be part of the change for health

