

## Cannabis (Marijuana) Patient Drug Information Sheet

**Patient Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dosage:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE: Cannabis is classified under Schedule 1 of the Federal Controlled Substances Act. It is prohibited from use, possession, or cultivation by federal law.**

Cannabis is the botanical name for the plant made of 2 main strains: *indica* and *sativa* both known for intoxicating or euphoric effects. Cannabis is a woody annual dioecious plant which grows outdoors in many countries, and is also prized for pulp (called hemp). Cannabis seeds are a valuable nutritional substance containing many beneficial nutritional ingredients. Other names for cannabis include Indian Hemp, Marijuana, marihuana, bhang, reefer, ganja, and bud.

**Indications:** Cannabis has been used for centuries as a medicine for a long list of ailments. More recent research has shown several beneficial medical effects including:

- *intraocular pressure reducing effects benefiting those with Glaucoma;*
- *appetite stimulant effects in those suffering from nausea or wasting syndrome;*
- *anti-emetic effects in people undergoing chemotherapy or radiation;*
- *anti-spasmodic effects in those experiencing muscle spasms or diseases like multiple sclerosis;*
- *analgesic effects which interrupt receptor nerve impulse transmission of pain signals at the location of injury.*

**Side effects:** Most common side-effects include increased heart rate dry mouth, somnolence, euphoria Less common include panic symptoms, hyperventilation. There is scant evidence of dosage-related mortality.

**Contraindications:** Use not recommended if patient has liver failure, substance dependence issues, cardiac function abnormalities like angina, or respiratory disease like COPD. (Due to inhaling as the route.)

**Route:** Cannabis can be inhaled (smoked), eaten in liquid or food form, elixir or taken via the rectal route as a suppository. It is most commonly smoked in pipes or rolled into cigarette papers, called "joints." Pipes deliver a higher level of cannabinoids in relation to combustion by products. Smoking irritates lungs and bronchial mucosa. Eating in food slows absorption and effect making it more difficult to titrate dosage. Do not eat raw cannabis- bake first. Elixirs and suppositories must be made according to specific requirements. Wait 2-3 hours after eating before re-dosing. Eating requires double or triple the dosage of smoking due to stomach acid metabolism. Eating not indicated for anti-nausea effects. Can be baked in food with moderate loss of potency. Effects are route dependent due to differential metabolism.

**Dosage:** 3-6 mg by mouth, 2-4 if smoked, Higher cannabinoid content (>7%) reduces dosage requirements.

**Onset/Duration:** Inhaling: onset is 2-10 minutes, peak blood level 30 minutes, duration 1-3 hours  
Eating: onset is 1 1/2 - 3 hours, peak blood level 2 hours, effective duration 4-6 hours.

**Patient teaching:** Carefully "titrate" dosage of any unknown variety by using small amounts until therapeutic effects are quantifiable. Inspect all cannabis for bugs, debris, or infections like mold. Discard contaminated cannabis. Baking cannabis in oven at 200 degrees for 15 minutes will kill pathogens. Use in conducive "set" and "setting," -relaxed, safe and comfortable surroundings. DO NOT operate machinery or automobiles immediately after using cannabis.

Naive users may experience panic symptoms- racing heart and increased anxiety. Treat by drinking 20 oz. of water, reassurance and attention to heart rate. Panic symptoms subside in 1-2 hours. Do not use alcohol concurrently with cannabis due to additive effects. Use smallest effective dose especially with unknown varieties. Eating or inhaling the same variety may result in substantially different effects. Many states have passed laws eliminating criminal and civil sanctions on ill people who use cannabis. These include: Alaska, Washington State, Oregon, California, Arizona. Be aware that cannabis use, cultivation and possession remain illegal under Federal Law. As with all medicines keep out of the reach of children. Report effects to your health care provider.

