

CBD Products

We hear a lot about marijuana these days, especially as more states take steps to legalize it. However, there is a new product, Cannabidiol (CBD), that is gaining attention. Drive down any street and you will see signs advertising where you can find CBD. So, what is CBD?

CBD is one of the most prevalent active ingredients in cannabis, the marijuana plant, and hemp. The Farm Bill of 2018 legalized at the federal level the cultivation of hemp and the sale of products derived from hemp so long as they contain less than .3% tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). Whether it is legal at the state level varies from state to state. CBD, which is derived from the hemp plant, does not cause psychoactive effects like THC but has been shown to have some positive effects on certain body systems. What many people don't realize is that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has only approved one CBD product to date. This product, the prescription drug Epidiolex, has been shown to be effective in treating two specific epilepsy disorders, Dravet syndrome and Lennox-Gastaut syndrome (LGS). As a result, there are many CBD products sold that are unregulated, meaning the level of THC in the product may be higher or lower than indicated on the packaging as there is no testing being done. There is also no guarantee that what you are purchasing contains any CBD at all, it could just be vegetable oil. In addition, claims of CBD's therapeutic benefit abound without any confirmation from the FDA.

CBD products are promoted for the treatment of anxiety, insomnia, and chronic pain as well as Alzheimer's disease, cancer, and diabetes. There are four different ways to ingest CBD. The first is orally. You can swallow drops of CBD oil directly or you can put it on or in your food or drinks. As with marijuana, there are also CBD-infused gummy bears and desserts. CBD taken orally takes longer to kick in as it has to travel through your digestive tract.

The second way to ingest CBD is sublingual or under the tongue. This allows for rapid onset because the CBD is absorbed into your body through your oral mucosa, moving quickly into your bloodstream and other cells. The third way is topical. Rather than entering the bloodstream, the CBD is absorbed through your body's largest organ, the skin. CBD products are used topically primarily to maintain skin health and lessen visible aging. The fourth way to use CBD is inhalation, using CBD as an E-Liquid or extract and using a vaping device. The CBD is inhaled into the lungs where it enters the blood stream, causing almost instant effects.

Although many tout the therapeutic effects of CBD, there are several potentially serious side effects associated with CBD use. These include liver damage, adverse interactions with other prescription drugs such as blood thinners, decreased fertility in males or male offspring of women who have been exposed, gastrointestinal distress, mood changes such as irritability and agitation, and decreased brain activity if coupled with alcohol or other drugs.

Due to the uncertainty as to the overall benefit versus risk of using CBD, additional research continues to be done to determine what daily CBD usage over prolonged periods of time does to the body. Given the

many unknowns associated with CBD usage, it is recommended that individuals talk with their health care provider before beginning usage of CBD.

References

What are the benefits of CBD--and is it safe to use?

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/consumer-health/expert-answers/is-cbd-safe-and-effective/faq-20446700>

What You Need to Know (And What We're Working to Find Out) About Products Containing Cannabis or Cannabis-derived Compounds, Including CBD

<https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/what-you-need-know-and-what-were-working-find-out-about-products-containing-cannabis-or-cannabis>

Better Data for a Better Understanding of the Use and Safety Profile of Cannabidiol (CBD) Products

<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/fda-voices/better-data-better-understanding-use-and-safety-profile-cannabidiol-cbd-products>

CBD Products are Everywhere. But do they work?

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/cbd-products-are-everywhere-but-do-they-work>

Cannabidiol (CBD)--What we know and what we don't

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/cannabidiol-cbd-what-we-know-and-what-we-dont-2018082414476>

The 4 Best Ways to Take CBD

<https://www.cibdol.com/cbd-encyclopedia/the-best-ways-to-take-cbd-for-your-lifestyle#nl-subscribe-popup>