

CSA Journal

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BY GEORGE B. PATTERSON, FOUNDER OF DOCTORS CHOICE CBD





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It seems that wherever you turn, there is copious information about cannabidiol (CBD) and its ability to cure anything that could possibly go wrong with you. While CBD can provide true relief to many common maladies, there are facts intertwined with fiction that are sometimes hard to separate. This article will present only the facts on how CBD can positively affect the life quality of those who use it — particularly older adults. It will provide guidelines on how those who'd like to try CBD can do so in an informed and safe manner.

The ultimate goal is to expand awareness of CBD's natural healing potential and provide relief. This is the start of the movement toward natural healing. While the benefits are real, it's paramount to ensure knowledge and understanding guide the path to unlock CBD's natural power.

What is CBD?

The *cannabis sativa* plant has two distinct and different strains: hemp and marijuana. The most common plant compound, called a cannabinoid, in hemp is known as cannabidiol (CBD). It is completely non-psychoactive; it produces no “high” such as happens with marijuana. More and more people are taking advantage of CBD as time goes on and its acceptance increases. The market for CBD products is estimated to be worth \$20 billion domestically with only growth

in its future (CBD Market Trends, 2021). Older adults, in particular, may benefit from many of CBD's healthful qualities.

Is CBD Legal?

The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, also known as the “Farm Bill,” is an update to federal legislation that reclassified hemp and allows it to be grown, processed, and sold in the United States. The Farm Bill removed hemp and hemp-derived CBD products from Schedule 1 controlled substance classification for the first time in recent history. For CBD to be sold legally in the United States, it must have 0.3% or less THC (tetrahydrocannabinol, the main psychoactive compound in cannabis) content. Most credible brands of CBD have zero THC content. Look for THC content on the packaging.

So nationally CBD is legal. But what does that mean in your state? That's where it gets a little murky. Most (33) states align with the updated federal guidelines. Some states, however, have additional guidelines as you can see in the examples below. A state's CBD legality is sometimes tied to the state's status on medical marijuana legality.

Kansas — Legal to use CBD products if approved by the FDA. CBD products below 5% THC levels are also legal for medical use.

Kentucky — Excluded the word “marijuana”

when defining CBD products for medical use. CBD oil is legal for use as well as long as it has less than 0.3% THC.

Montana — Legalized medical marijuana and CBD products that are approved by the FDA.

South Carolina — CBD products are legal in South Carolina as long as THC is below 0.3%. Additionally, CBD for medical use is legal as long as it's below 0.9% THC levels (HealthCanal, 2021).

The wise course of action is to review your particular state's CBD legality status. One quick shortcut is if there is a CBD store nearby that doesn't require a special state-issued card, your state likely aligns with the federal standards. Also, it is legal to order CBD online and have it shipped to your home in all fifty states (theCBDencyclopedia, 2021).

CBD and the Body

The human body has a built-in endocannabinoid system that helps to regulate many of the body's physiological processes. These range from pain management to temperature regulation, digestion, and sleep — to mention only a few. This system is made up of a vast array of receptors throughout the body. There are two types of receptors: CB1 receptors are found primarily in the brain and central nervous system, while CB2 receptors are found primarily in organs and the body's periphery. CBD fits like a Lego brick into these receptors, aiding the body in its systems regulation.

What Can CBD Help?

There is expansive anecdotal information stating that CBD can help a broad assortment of maladies. Dr. Jorge Roig, MD, Medical Director at The Pain Center, states, "CBD is a highly effective alternative to pharmaceuticals. It can treat the 'Big 3' maladies common to older adults." The Big 3 are:

- Chronic Pain
- Insomnia
- Anxiety

As we age, chronic pain becomes a part of everyday living for many. Often, it doesn't need to be. CBD can change how people experience the world. Chronic pain comes from arthritis, joint pain, muscle pain, and more. These can all be addressed positively through the use of CBD. While the level of relief varies from person to person, most people do achieve some easing of their pain. Relieving chronic pain is the most common use for CBD. The way CBD aids in managing chronic pain is through reduction of inflammation (National Institutes of Health, 2021).

"CBD's most far-reaching health effect may be its anti-inflammatory properties. And not just in a knee or hip joint, but throughout the body, including the central nervous system and the brain," says Joseph Maroon, MD, clinical professor of Neurological Surgery at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

Many older adults experience disruptive sleep patterns. Some can sleep in short blocks, but others cannot. The body needs restorative sleep to maintain a healthy lifestyle. CBD before bed can aid in gaining this restorative sleep back. It allows the body and mind to relax and find sleep (Elder Guru, 2021).

There are few who don't experience anxious moments. There are many people who have serious and potentially debilitating anxiety issues. CBD has been effective in addressing anxiety and increasing focus. CBD allows the brain to slow down and recharge. It allows the body to relax as well. CBD has even been used effectively to battle epilepsy (FDA, 2018).

Like nearly all medications, CBD can have some side effects. Always check with your doctor before starting to use CBD. However, there is little risk of overdosing with CBD (Colorado Botanicals, 2021). The Mayo Clinic lists potential side effects of CBD such as dry mouth, diarrhea, reduced appetite, drowsiness, and fatigue (Mayo Clinic, 2022). CBD can also interact with other medications someone is taking, such as blood thinners (Bauer, 2020).

CBD for Older Adults

Many older adults are leery of any product with anything resembling "cannabis" in the name due to the longstanding federal prejudice against it. Marijuana was largely introduced in the early 1900s from south of the border, and became associated with immigrants, who triggered fear and prejudice that was conferred on the cannabis they brought into the States. These feelings intensified during the Great Depression (Frontline, n.d.). However, that attitude is finally changing as many states have legalized marijuana, especially for medical use. As these changes occur, older Americans are realizing that there is no harm, and a lot of potential good, in trying pot's non-psychoactive cousin.

Among Americans sixty-five years and older, 20 percent said they had tried CBD oil in a January 2019 *Consumer Reports* survey, up from 14 percent a year earlier (Gill, 2020). That number is growing as there are more ways now than ever to introduce CBD into a daily regimen. Two basic routes of use exist: topical application (creams, salves, patches, roll-ons, bath bombs, etc.) and ingestible options (oils, gummies, capsules, infused drinks, etc.). Joint and muscle pain are typically treated with topical CBD products.



Dr. Jorge Roig, MD describing benefits of CBD for older people. Doctors Choice CBD

Insomnia, anxiety, and more severe, chronic pain are typically treated with ingestible CBD products. There are enough options to allow individuals to find the intake option that works best for them. CBD also is available through a vaporized liquid. As long-term effects from vaping are not known, this method of CBD use is strongly discouraged.

CBD use may cause unexpected interaction with other drugs commonly used by older adults. These drugs with potential interactions range from liver medications to blood thinners, according to Harvard Medical. The best course of action is always to consult your primary care physician to understand potential drug interactions (Bykov, 2021).

Credible CBD Products

While CBD products have been federally legal since 2018, there is no government oversight regarding the CBD market yet. There also is currently no FDA oversight on essential oils, weight loss supplements, virility enhancements, or makeup. Only recently has the FDA begun to address unsubstantiated or overreaching claims regarding CBD's efficacy. This intervention makes finding credible CBD products a little less of a challenge, but there is still a lot of information to sort out. As with sushi, do not buy CBD at a gas station. Look up the company's website. Understand product terminology. If there is a claim that sounds too good to be true, it likely is. CBD is not a cure-all. CBD

can, however, help manage the pain and frustrations that come as individuals age. It is important to garner knowledge from research at reputable websites. With a little effort, it's not difficult to find quality products to aid in the journey forward.

Some key product information to check:

- **Look at the product's website.** If there is no site, move on! The website should clearly define how the products are made, from seed to shelf. It should have guides on how to use the products, suggested dosage, and information about how CBD can work with the body to provide relief and recovery.
- **Where is the hemp grown?** Only buy products made in the United States and that offer a Certificate of Analysis (COA) that shows exactly what is in the product.
- **Is the hemp organic?** Check to see if chemical fertilizer was used in growing. Look for the "USDA Certified Organic" label. This ensures chemical-free growth.
- **How was the CBD processed?** To avoid harsh chemicals often used in processing, look for "solvent-free" processing that utilizes safe carbon dioxide gas instead of chemicals.
- **Look for products that state they are "broad spectrum."** That means that the whole plant, except for the trace THC that is removed, was used

for CBD. If a product states it is “full spectrum,” it either still contains THC or is mislabeled.

- **Look for THC content.** It must be 0.3% or less.
- **Choose where to buy the CBD.** Some people are not comfortable buying CBD online. Many pharmacies, dispensaries, and doctors’ offices now sell CBD products. You can discuss options with them to ensure you have all the information you need.

Starting a CBD Journey

While CBD has been used for thousands of years as a natural healing agent dating back to 2737 BC in China (Cadena, 2019) we are just now beginning to see its widespread use in the United States. The first step for those interested in utilizing CBD’s natural healing is speaking with their doctor. The medical community is now more open to discussing non-pharmaceutical options to manage common ailments. For instance, in the resources section of this article there is a series of videos created by Dr. Sanjay Gupta that are highly informative.

Once older adults have discussed CBD as an option with their doctor, they need to determine what they want to address with CBD and the most effective way to address those particular issue(s). Perhaps they have rheumatoid arthritis in their hands. With a little reading, they’ll learn that the most effective way to address this pain is with a concentrated salve. If they’d like to have a great night’s sleep, they’ll learn that a CBD-infused gummy before bed can work wonders. If it’s joint pain that challenges their day, some lotion in the morning on problem areas can make their day far more livable.

The next step is to monitor how the product is working. It’s a good idea for patients to keep a record of how a particular product makes them feel and how long it takes to work. Each of us is different, so the effects of CBD vary among individuals.

Whatever an older adult’s ailment is, the first step to getting help from CBD is with knowledge and understanding. CBD is an incredible non-pharmaceutical option to manage everyday issues and enhance quality of life. By taking the time to understand what CBD is and how it acts in the body, it’s possible to come up with a natural solution to persistent health problems. •CSA

RESOURCES

Dr. Sanjay Gupta CNN Medical Marijuana Documentary Series. Very informative and easy to understand. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wdQ2q4tWCjw>

Doctors Choice CBD information focusing on organic CBD products.

Available at <https://doctors-choice-cbd.com/>

Elder Guru – CBD Health Benefits for Seniors. Available at <https://www.elderguru.com/11-cbd-health-benefits-for-seniors/>



George B. Patterson is the founder of Doctors Choice CBD, based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He earned his BA at the University of Pittsburgh prior to positions in marketing and sales. Working for Vanguard Scientific Systems, he was first introduced to the natural power of CBD. To expand access to all-natural, organic CBD, he introduced Doctors Choice CBD products in 2019 with partner, Pain Management Specialist Dr. Jorge Roig, MD. The sole focus of Doctors Choice CBD is to offer a natural relief option to those in pain. Contact George at DoctorsChoiceCBD@gmail.com.

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