

Medical cannabis dosage forms



Medical Cannabis Policy Advisory Board, 12/19/2023

Trevor Eckhoff, policy analyst – DHHS Center for Medical Cannabis

1. Background
2. Utah legal dosage forms
3. Suppositories as a legal dosage form
 - a. Safety and efficacy of cannabis suppositories
 - b. Cannabis Research Review Board (CRRB) position on suppositories
4. Eye and ear drops as a legal dosage form
5. Safety and efficacy of cannabis eye and ear drops
6. Other dosage forms and product types
7. Options

Presentation outline

Background

The Utah Patients Coalition (UPC) would like the board to consider amending the statute to add suppositories and eye/ear drops as a legal dosage form for medical cannabis products.

Dosage forms

Legal Dosage Form	Legal Dosage Form Examples	Typical Routes of Administration
Tablet	Tablet	Oral
Capsule	Capsule	Oral
Gelatinous cube	Gummy, chews, gelatin cube, lozenge	Oral
Liquid suspension	Liquid suspension	Oral
Unprocessed flower	Flower, Bud	Vaporization
Wax	Wax	Vaporization
Resin	Resin	Vaporization
Concentrated oil or viscous oil	Vape cartridge	Vaporization
Transdermal preparation	Skin patch	Transdermal
Sublingual preparation	Extract, Tincture	Sublingual
Topical preparation	Salve, balm, lotion, cream	Topical
Aerosol	Inhaler	Inhalation

Suppositories as a legal dosage form

- Very limited objective information, but plentiful anecdotal information.
- Suppositories are legal in the Canada medical cannabis market and 5 of 16 medical-only states: Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, and Pennsylvania.
- They are typically allowed or are unregulated in adult-use states.

Common reasons cited for suppositories:

- Inability to use cannabis orally or via inhalation due to esophageal or gastrointestinal issues.
- Localized relief for vaginal or colon-related conditions such as menstrual pain, endometriosis, hemorrhoids, and interstitial cystitis/bladder pain syndrome.
- Dyspareunia (genital pain due to sex).

Safety and efficacy of cannabis suppositories

- The safety and efficacy of cannabis suppositories from the scientific and medical communities is inconclusive and requires further study.
- In 2021, the Cannabis Research Review Board (CRRB) concluded that there isn't sufficient evidence to support the effectiveness of cannabis administration rectally or vaginally.

Eye and ear drops as a legal dosage form

- No medical cannabis programs explicitly allow eye or ear drops that predominantly contain THC.
- California and Nevada prohibit eye drops in both their respective medical and adult-use programs.

Common reasons cited for eye and ear drops:

- Localized relief of inflammatory pressure.
- Some use to reduce reduce intraocular pressure (IOP), a symptom of glaucoma.

Safety and efficacy of cannabis eye and ear drops

- THC isn't water-soluble and can't be administered in a water-based drop, according to the University of Utah.
- The ability of THC to reduce IOP has been long debated.
 - There is limited evidence that cannabis has a demonstrated ability to reduce IOP, and higher doses of CBD may possibly increase IOP.

Other dosage forms and product types

- The list of medicinal dosage forms in Utah is generally comparable to other medical cannabis-only states.
- The board could evaluate product types within dosage form categories that are currently not legal in Utah, such as chocolate as an infused edible.
- Should the board want to explore more product types as possibilities for the medical cannabis program, more research is needed.

1. Recommend that no new dosage forms be allowed.
2. Add suppositories to the list of legal dosage forms.
3. Add ear and eye drops to the list of legal dosage forms.
4. Consider recommending the addition of other dosage forms beyond suppositories and eye/ear drops.
5. Consider recommending new product types be allowed under certain dosage forms, such as chocolate as an infused edible.
6. Table a vote pending a CRRB review and/or update on any new evidence based clinical literature on the safety and efficacy of alternative dosage forms.

Recommendation options