

# Medical Cannabis

## Adverse drug reactions, drug-drug interactions, and safety

While medical cannabis is generally safe and well tolerated, patients and providers should be aware of several common adverse effects and safety issues.

### **1. Common adverse effects**

- a. Dizziness, dry mouth, excess sedation, anxiety, palpitations, orthostatic hypotension, and paranoia are common side effects. Start with low doses and increase slowly

### **2. Contraindications**

- a. Medical cannabis is contraindicated in patients who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or have a history of psychosis/schizophrenia

### **3. Cardiovascular risk**

- a. Cannabis use, especially smoking cannabis, may be associated with increased risk of stroke, myocardial infarction, and coronary artery disease

### **4. Drug-drug interactions**

- a. THC and CBD may interact with many drugs including, but not limited to, anticoagulants, tacrolimus, phenytoin, and buprenorphine
- b. Cannabis may cause excess sedation when used in combination with alcohol, benzodiazepines, opioids, or other sedating medications

### **5. Driving safety**

- a. Cannabis use impairs driving ability. Patients should not drive for at least 8 hours after using cannabis.

### **6. Cannabis withdrawal**

- a. Abrupt discontinuation of cannabis may result in undesirable but not dangerous effects such as insomnia, irritability, headache, and anxiety.

### **7. Cannabis use disorder**

- a. Approximately 10% of adults using cannabis may develop cannabis use disorder.

### **8. Cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome**

- a. Regular use of high doses of cannabis may result in a syndrome of severe, intractable nausea, vomiting, and abdominal pain. Patients may report relief from hot showers. Discontinuing cannabis use is the most effective treatment

### **9. Safe medication storage**

- a. Advise patients to store medical cannabis, especially edible products, in the original container up and away from other food products and out of reach of children.