

Everything You Need to Know About Cannabis

A Community Education Talk

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Important Disclaimer

I am not a medical doctor or healthcare professional.

This presentation is for educational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice.

Always consult with your qualified healthcare provider before making any decisions about cannabis use.

Who Am I?

Dr. Daniel Bear

PhD in Social Policy, London School
of Economics

Cannabis researcher for nearly 20 years

Professor & drug policy expert

Medical cannabis consumer



People Take Drugs for a Reason

Understanding WHY people use cannabis is key
to understanding the plant itself

Why People Use Cannabis

Wellness & Relaxation

Feeling good, reducing stress, enjoying life

Health Benefits

Managing pain, sleep, anxiety, and other conditions

Exploration & Experience

New perspectives, creativity, and social connection

What do consumers need to know?



Cannabis in Canada Today

Ontario's Legal Framework

What's Legal

- Adults 19+ can purchase and possess cannabis
- Buy from licensed retailers (stores or OCS.ca)
- Possess up to 30 grams in public
- Grow up to 4 plants per household

Where You Can Use It

- Private residences
- Some outdoor public spaces
- NOT in vehicles, workplaces, or most public areas



What Remains Illegal

- Driving while impaired by cannabis
- Selling cannabis without a license
- Giving or selling cannabis to anyone under 19
- Possessing more than the legal limit

These remain serious offences with significant penalties

Understanding the Plant

Cannabis: A Complex Plant

- Cannabis flower comes from the female plant
- Over 100 different cannabinoids
- Hundreds of other compounds (terpenes, flavonoids)
- Effects depend on the product and how it's used

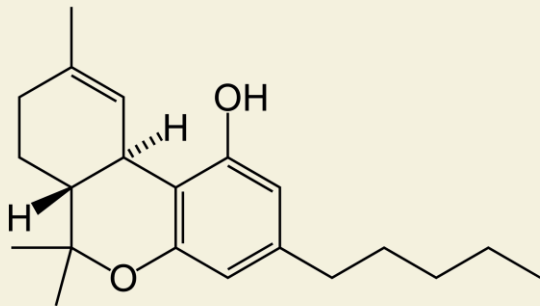
There is NO "one size fits all" with cannabis

Meet the Cannabinoids

THC

The "intoxicating one"

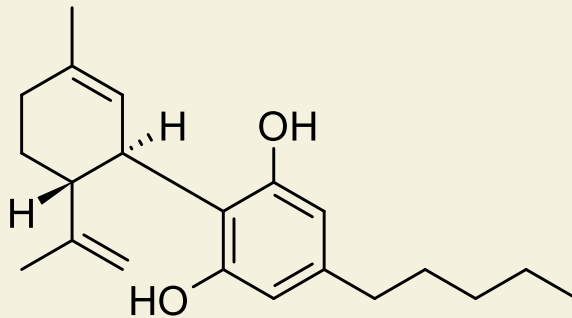
Creates the "high" feeling



CBD

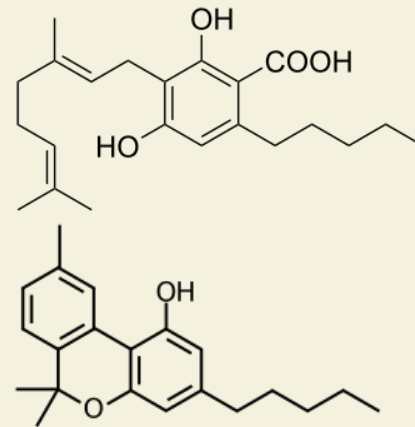
The "calming one"

Non-intoxicating, may reduce anxiety



Others

CBN, CBG, CBC and 100+ more being studied

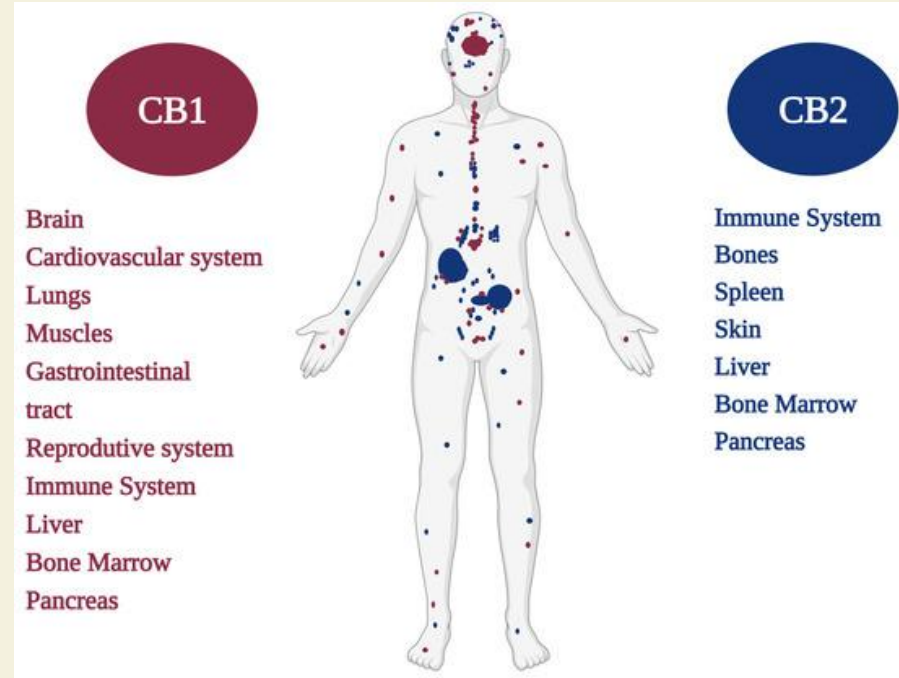


The Endocannabinoid System

Our bodies have a natural system with receptors for cannabinoids

CB1 receptors: Brain, nervous system

CB2 receptors: Immune system, organs



This is why cannabis affects us - it interacts with this existing system

Cannabis Products

Dried flower (buds)

Oils and tinctures

Edibles (foods and drinks)

Topicals (creams and balms)

Concentrates (extracts)

Each type works differently in the body



How People Use Cannabis

Inhalation (Smoking/Vaping)

Onset: Within minutes

Duration: 2-4 hours

Fast acting, easier to control dose

Smoking has respiratory risks





Edibles (Foods & Drinks)

Onset: 30 minutes to 2 hours

Duration: 4-10 hours (much longer!)

Key Rule: "Start low, go slow"

Start with 1-2mg dose

80%+ of people will feel 4mg



Edibles: The Most Common Mistake

Many people eat an edible, feel nothing after 30 minutes, and eat more

Then BOTH doses hit at once

Result: An unpleasant experience that could have been avoided

Other Methods

Oral-Mucosal (Sprays/Tinctures)

Under the tongue, absorbed through mouth lining

Onset: 15-45 minutes • Duration: 4-6 hours

Topicals (Creams/Balms)

Applied to skin for localized relief

Usually not intoxicating • Good for pain/inflammation





Documented Benefits

Medical Benefits: What Research Shows

Pain management (chronic pain, neuropathic pain)

Sleep support (maintain sleep, not falling asleep)

Anxiety reduction (with appropriate CBD:THC ratios)

Appetite stimulation

Nausea and vomiting

Multiple sclerosis symptom management



The Reality Check

Cannabis is NOT a miracle cure

It works for some people, not for others

Effects vary greatly between individuals

Medical guidance is essential for therapeutic use

In some studies, only 10% of people benefitted

Understanding Risks

Being Honest About Risks

Cannabis is not risk-free

Legal does not mean harmless

Risks depend on:

- How often you use it
- How you use it (method)
- How much you use
- Your age and health status



Mental Health

Daily or near-daily use of cannabis can contribute to dependence and mental health problems over time.



Driving

Cannabis can impair your motor coordination, judgment and other skills required for safe driving.



Respiratory Effects

Toxic and carcinogenic chemicals found in tobacco smoke are also found in cannabis smoke, and can affect the lungs and airways.



Pregnancy

Substances in cannabis are transferred from mother to child and can affect your baby. Not using cannabis if pregnant or breastfeeding is the safest option.

Potential Health Risks

Respiratory issues (from smoking)

Cannabis Use Disorder (about 10% of users)

Impaired brain development (under age 25)

Mental health concerns (anxiety, psychosis in some)

Drug interactions with medications

Impaired coordination and reaction time

Overconsumption: "Greening Out"

What it feels like:

Nausea, dizziness, anxiety, paranoia, rapid heart rate

Important to know:

It's unpleasant but not dangerous
It will pass (usually within a few hours)

How to prevent:

Start with low doses, wait for effects before consuming more



Safer Use Guidelines

Lower-Risk Cannabis Use

- Wait until at least 16 (ideally 25) to start using
- Choose products with balanced THC:CBD ratios
- Avoid smoking - choose vaping, edibles, or other methods
- Limit how often you use (avoid daily use if possible)
- Start with low doses, especially with edibles
- Never drive or operate machinery while impaired
- Avoid mixing with alcohol or other drugs
- Buy from legal, regulated sources

Practical Tips for Safer Use

Start Low, Go Slow

Especially important with edibles

Set and Setting Matter

Use in comfortable, safe environments

Know Your Source

Legal retailers provide tested,
labeled products

Common Myths

Cannabis Myths vs. Reality

FACTS

Myth: Cannabis is completely harmless

Reality: Benefits exist but also real risks

Myth: Cannabis cures everything

Reality: Helps some conditions, not all

Myth: You can't become dependent

Reality: About 10% develop Cannabis Use Disorder

Myth: Cannabis is a "gateway drug"

Reality: Most users don't progress to other drugs

VS

MYTHS

The Truth is Nuanced

**Cannabis is neither a demon nor a
miracle plant**

**Understanding helps us make informed choices
and reduce potential harms**

Key Takeaways

- Cannabis is a complex plant, not simple
- People use it for valid reasons
- Legal doesn't mean risk-free
- Start low, go slow
- Medical guidance is important for therapeutic use, or if you're currently taking medications
- Understanding reduces fear and harm

Resources for More Information

Weed Out Misinformation

www.WeedOutMisinformation.ca

Ontario Cannabis Store

ocs.ca - Education section

Your Healthcare Provider

For personalized medical guidance

Government of Canada

canada.ca/cannabis

Questions?

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