

MEDICAL MARIJUANA FOR PTSD? WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW.

EDUCATIONAL SERIES:
HEALTH CONDITIONS

Updated 2024

FLORIDA LAW FORMALLY RECOGNIZES POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD) AS A QUALIFYING CONDITION FOR MEDICAL MARIJUANA.

WHAT IS PTSD?

- PTSD is a debilitating disorder that can develop following a traumatic event or events.
- Symptoms of PTSD include reliving the trauma through distressing memories, nightmares, or flashbacks, avoiding reminders of the trauma, feeling emotionally numb, and experiencing intense emotions like anger or fear, which can severely disrupt sleep and daily activities. Symptoms can emerge immediately after the trauma, but they may also start years later and can fluctuate, especially under stress or when reminded of the traumatic event.

CAN MEDICAL MARIJUANA HELP PTSD?

- Few studies have examined the effect of medical marijuana as treatment for symptoms of PTSD and the results of these studies so far have been mixed.
- Preliminary data suggests that medical marijuana might improve the overall severity of some PTSD symptoms; however, some individuals have reported worsening of certain PTSD symptoms.
- Studies to date caution that medical marijuana use may be associated with risks such as confusion, dizziness, and feeling sick (e.g., nausea).

WHAT SHOULD I ASK MY HEALTHCARE PROVIDER?

1. Discuss if you have any history of substance use disorder or a mental health condition such as schizophrenia.

Patients with these conditions are often excluded from clinical trials that examine the effectiveness and safety of medical marijuana, due to concerns about an increased risk of adverse events.

2. Discuss if you are taking any prescription medications to treat other conditions, such as pain, depression, cancer, or for an autoimmune disorder.

Certain compounds found in medical marijuana (e.g., cannabidiol) can interact with medications for those conditions and may require further dosing adjustments that should be guided by a physician.

3. Report and discuss any concerning effects of medical marijuana with your physician.

There are many possible interactions between medical marijuana, diseases, medications, and other substances. Therefore, regular communication with your healthcare provider can assist in identifying risks.



1. The 2020 Florida Statutes, Title XXIX, Chapter 381, section 381.986: Medical use of marijuana.
2. Jugl S et al. A Mapping Literature Review of Medical Cannabis Clinical Outcomes and Quality of Evidence in Approved Conditions in the USA from 2016 to 2019. Med Cannabis Cannabinoids 2021.
3. National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2017. The health effects of cannabis and cannabinoids: The current state of evidence and recommendations for research. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

4. Bonn-Miller MO, Sisley S, Riggs P, Yazar-Klosinski B, Wang JB, Loflin MJE, Shechet B, Hennigan C, Matthews R, Emerson A, Doblin R. The short-term impact of 3 smoked cannabis preparations versus placebo on PTSD symptoms: A randomized cross-over clinical trial. PLoS One. 2021 Mar 17;16(3):e0246990.
5. Bonn-Miller MO, Brunstetter M, Simonian A, Loflin MJ, Vandrey R, Babson KA, Wortzel H. The Long-Term, Prospective, Therapeutic Impact of Cannabis on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Cannabis Cannabinoid Res. 2022 Apr;7(2):214-223.
6. Brown, J.D., Wintersstein, A.G. Potential Adverse Drug Events and Drug-Drug Interactions with Medical and Consumer Cannabidiol (CBD) Use. J. Clin. Med. 2019, 8, 989. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jcm8070989>

For more information, please visit the Consortium for Medical Marijuana Clinical Outcomes Research at mmjoutcomes.org.

Please note: this document is for informational purposes only, but is not medical or legal advice and should not be used to make healthcare decisions. Please consult your healthcare provider to find out what treatment options are available for you.