

# MEDICAL MARIJUANA FOR CANCER-RELATED PAIN? WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW.

**FLORIDA LAW DOES NOT RECOGNIZE CANCER-RELATED PAIN AS A QUALIFYING CONDITION FOR MEDICAL MARIJUANA; HOWEVER, CHRONIC PAIN IS A QUALIFYING CONDITION.<sup>1</sup>**

A physician may determine that pain associated with a legally recognized condition, such as cancer, can be treated with medical marijuana.

## WHAT IS CANCER-RELATED PAIN?

- Pain is a common symptom in people with cancer. It can be caused by the tumor itself, its effects on the body, or by cancer treatments such as surgery, radiation or chemotherapy.<sup>2,3</sup>
- Cancer-related pain can be acute (short-term) or chronic (long-term) and may feel like a dull ache or a sharp, burning sensation.<sup>2</sup>

## CAN MEDICAL MARIJUANA HELP WITH CANCER-RELATED PAIN?

- Current evidence remains insufficient to recommend for or against the use of medical marijuana in managing cancer-related pain.<sup>4</sup>
- Some studies suggest that non-smoking forms of medical marijuana may provide mild cancer pain relief compared with placebo, but newer studies usually do not support this.<sup>4,6</sup>
- Studies that assessed non-smoking forms of medical marijuana for cancer-related pain found more side effects compared with placebo, especially sleepiness and dizziness.<sup>6</sup>
- For more information about medical marijuana and chronic pain, see [Medical Marijuana for Pain, What You Should Know](#).

## WHAT SHOULD I ASK MY HEALTHCARE PROVIDER?



1. Discuss any prescription medications you are taking, including those for cancer, pain, depression, or autoimmune disorders.

Tell your provider about any other health problems you have. There are many possible interactions between medical marijuana and diseases, or other substances.<sup>4,5</sup> If you are using medical marijuana, opioids and other types of pain medications, such as amitriptyline, may require dose adjustments guided by a physician.<sup>5</sup>

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

Medical marijuana can cause side effects such as sleepiness, dizziness, confusion, and a fast heartbeat.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, regular communication with your healthcare provider can assist in identifying risks and side effects.

1. The 2020 Florida Statutes. Title XXIX, Chapter 381, section 381.986: Medical use of marijuana.

2. Portenoy RK, Ahmed E. Cancer pain syndromes. *Hematol Oncol Clin North Am.* 2018;32(3):371-386. doi:10.1016/j.hoc.2018.01.002

3. Häuser W, Welsch P, Radbruch L, Fisher E, Bell RF, Moore RA. Cannabis-based medicines and medical cannabis for adults with cancer pain. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev.* 2023 Jun 5;6(6):CD014915. doi: 10.1002/14651858.CD014915.pub2. PMID: 37283486; PMCID: PMC10241005.

4. Ilana M. Braun et al. Cannabis and Cannabinoids in Adults With Cancer: ASCO Guideline. *J Clin Oncol* 42, 1575-1593(2024). DOI:10.1200/JCO.23.02596. Accessed February 19, 2026.

5. To, J., Davis, M., Sbrana, A. et al. MASCC guideline: cannabis for cancer-related pain and risk of harms and adverse events. *Support Care Cancer* 31, 202 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00520-023-07662-1>

6. Boland EG, Bennett MI, Allgar V, Boland JW. Cannabinoids for adult cancer-related pain: systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMJ Support Palliat Care.* 2020 Mar;10(1):14-24. doi: 10.1136/bmjspcare-2019-002032. Epub 2020 Jan 20. PMID: 31959586.