

# MEDICAL MARIJUANA FOR ANXIETY? WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW.

EDUCATIONAL SERIES:  
HEALTH CONDITIONS

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**FLORIDA LAW DOES NOT RECOGNIZE ANXIETY, OR GENERALIZED ANXIETY DISORDER, AS A QUALIFYING CONDITION FOR MEDICAL MARIJUANA.**

A physician may determine that anxiety symptoms are related to other qualifying conditions under certain circumstances.<sup>1</sup>

## CAN MEDICAL MARIJUANA HELP ANXIETY?

Limited evidence suggests medical marijuana may help anxiety symptoms when present with another condition, such as chronic non-cancer pain.<sup>2</sup> Evidence does not currently support medical marijuana for generalized anxiety disorder.<sup>3</sup>

## WHAT IF I HAVE PTSD AND ANXIETY?

Patients with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) often have many symptoms including anxiety. Florida law formally recognizes PTSD as a qualifying condition for medical marijuana.

Limited research has shown some PTSD symptoms may improve with medical marijuana, but evidence is limited to a synthetic cannabis medication known as **nabilone**.<sup>3</sup> Research on medical marijuana used to treat PTSD and its symptoms are ongoing. PTSD is one of the top conditions being prioritized for research.

## WHAT SHOULD I ASK MY HEALTHCARE PROVIDER?

**1. It is important to discuss the *type* of medical marijuana being considered with your physician.**

The THC in medical marijuana has been shown to make some types of pre-existing anxiety worse. Research is not clear on how CBD affects pre-existing anxiety.

**2. Discuss if you are taking any prescription medications for anxiety.**

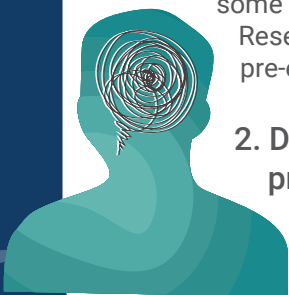
Certain medications, such as **benzodiazepines**, have potential to

increase side effects when combined with medical marijuana.

Some types of antidepressant medications are used to treat anxiety, such as **Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs)**. While these medications have low to moderate risks when combined with medical marijuana, they should be used with caution.

**3. Discuss if you have other mental health conditions, such as depression.**

Research is not clear on how medical marijuana may affect anxiety symptoms when present with another mental health condition.



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

<sup>2</sup> Black N, Stockings E, Campbell G, et al. Cannabinoids for the treatment of mental disorders and symptoms of mental disorders: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Lancet Psychiatry*. 2019;6(12):995-1010.

<sup>3</sup> Stanciu CN, Brunette MF, Teja N, Budney AJ. Evidence for Use of Cannabinoids in Mood Disorders, Anxiety Disorders, and PTSD: A Systematic Review [published online ahead of print, 2021 Feb 3]. *Psychiatr Serv*.



# ABOUT THE CONSORTIUM

Established in June 2019, the Consortium for Medical Marijuana Clinical Outcomes Research conducts, shares, and supports research on the effects of medical marijuana on health conditions and symptoms in Florida.

Composed of nine universities across the state and led by a leadership team at the University of Florida, the Consortium works to contribute to the understanding of medical marijuana use on health conditions and symptoms.



## MEMBER UNIVERSITIES

## CONTACT US

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