

# Office of Medical Marijuana Use

## Florida's Official Source for Responsible Use

Know the Facts:  
Epilepsy

### Medical Marijuana

Epilepsy is a central nervous system (neurological) disorder in which brain activity becomes abnormal, causing seizures or periods of unusual behavior, sensations and sometimes loss of awareness.<sup>1</sup>

Cannabinoids have been studied for treatment of seizures associated with forms of epilepsy that are difficult to control with other medicines.<sup>2</sup> Cannabinoids are substances in medical cannabis that act on cells in the body, including the brain. The two main cannabinoids used in medicine are tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD).<sup>3</sup>

Preclinical studies suggest that phytocannabinoids, especially cannabidiol and cannabidivarin, have potent anticonvulsant effects which are mediated by the endocannabinoid system. Human studies are limited in number and quality, but suggest that cannabidiol has anticonvulsant effects in adult and infantile epilepsy and is well tolerated after prolonged administration.<sup>4</sup>

CBD and THC have many of the same medical benefits. They can provide relief from several of the same conditions. However, CBD doesn't cause the euphoric effects that occur with THC.<sup>5</sup>

Medical marijuana comes in a variety of forms, including:

- Vape
- Creams and Patches
- Chocolate and Gels
- Capsules and Tinctures
- Shatter and Crumble
- Whole Flower

### Considering Medical Marijuana for your treatment plan.

Years of research suggests Cannabidiol (CBD) does have benefits for patients who experience epileptic seizures, although the impact is not entirely understood. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the first CBD medication for seizure treatment in 2018. The medication, Epidiolex, was authorized for the treatment of two rare forms of epilepsy: Lennox-Gastaut syndrome and Dravet syndrome.<sup>6</sup>

Epilepsy patients may consider speaking with their doctor about including medical marijuana into their treatment plan. If you choose to speak with your doctor about adding medical marijuana to your treatment plan, remember to:

- **Be honest** about your health situation and explain why you would like to discuss this treatment option.<sup>7</sup>
- **Be thorough** about the treatments that you have already tried to treat your epilepsy. It's helpful to explain what has worked for you and what has not. By assessing your treatment needs, progress and long-term goals, your physician will be better able to understand why this additional therapy interests you and how it may be able to be included into your treatment plan.<sup>7</sup>
- **Be well-informed** about medical marijuana. Do your research about medical marijuana. It's also helpful to understand the basics of the medical marijuana use program in Florida.<sup>7</sup>

The Office of Medical Marijuana Use is charged with writing and implementing the Department of Health's rules for medical marijuana. This is to ensure the health and safety of the public as it relates to marijuana.<sup>8</sup>

For additional information about Florida's Office of Medical Marijuana Use, please visit: **KnowTheFactsMMJ.com** or call **800-808-9580**.

Sources:

- 1 Epilepsy. Overview. MayoClinic.org. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/epilepsy/symptoms-causes/syc-20350093>
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- 3 Medical Marijuana and Epilepsy. Epilepsy.com. <https://tinyurl.com/3t8h57au>
- 4 Phytocannabinoids and Epilepsy. cannabisClinicians.org. <https://tinyurl.com/2h2kr8df>
- 5 CBD vs. THC: What's the difference? Healthline.com. <https://www.healthline.com/health/cbd-vs-thc#legality-in-the-us>
- 6 FDA Approves First Drug Comprised of an Active Ingredient Derived from Marijuana to Treat Rare, Severe Forms of Epilepsy. FDA.gov. <https://tinyurl.com/b79bzhy9>
- 7 How to Talk to Your Doctor About Medical Marijuana. PatriotCare.org. <https://patriotcare.org/talk-doctor-medical-marijuana/>
- 8 About the OMMU. KnowTheFactsMMJ.com. <https://knowthefactsmmj.com/about/>