

Cannabis

Non-medical cannabis is legal in Canada.

There are many different views on cannabis. Some may find the transition to legalized cannabis in British Columbia challenging. There are some facts you should know that will help keep British Columbians safe. For information from the Government of British Columbia on cannabis legislation, regulations, impacts on travel, growing at home and more visit [Government of British Columbia: Cannabis](#).

Cannabis can be used for medical or non-medical purposes. People may choose to use cannabis for its therapeutic effects. But it can also harm your health. Cannabis for medical purposes has been legal in Canada for several years.

Learn how cannabis can impact the health of you and your family.

- [Cannabis and Your Health](#)
- [Medical Cannabis](#)

Common Questions about Cannabis

Find answers to some of the [most common questions about Cannabis](#). Learn how cannabis makes you feel, the health risks of consuming cannabis and safety considerations.

What is Cannabis?

Cannabis is also known as marijuana, pot or weed. The cannabis plant contains many chemical compounds, including cannabinoids. These chemicals may affect the brain and other parts of the body's nervous system. THC and CBD are the most well-known cannabinoids.

For more information about the cannabis plant and its components:

- [Health Canada: About cannabis](#)
- [Government of British Columbia: Cannabis-An Introduction, BC Cannabis Stores](#)
- [Centre for Addiction and Mental Health \(CAMH\): Cannabis](#)
- [Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre: Cannabis](#)
- [BC Liquor Distribution Branch: Cannabis Updates](#)
- [Kids Help Phone: Cannabis- Important things to know](#)

For information on cannabis edibles and vaping cannabis, visit the following webpages:

- [Government of British Columbia: Cannabis health information](#)
- [Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction: 7 Things You Need to Know about Edible Cannabis](#)
- [Government of Canada: Factsheet - Health Effects of Cannabis](#)
- [Government of Canada: Health effects of cannabis](#)
- [Vaping](#)
- [Government of Canada: Consumer Information – Cannabis](#)

Safer and Responsible Use

Cannabis affects everyone in different ways. Understanding the health risks and potential benefits of cannabis and guidelines for safer use can help you make decisions that are right for you.

[Canada's Lower-Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines](#) provide 10 recommendations on safer cannabis use, if you choose to use cannabis. These recommendations focus on non-medical use of cannabis but should also be considered if you use cannabis for medical purposes.

1. The most effective way to avoid the risks of cannabis use is to abstain from use.
2. Delaying cannabis use, at least until after adolescence, will reduce the likelihood or severity of adverse health outcomes.
3. Use products with low THC content and high CBD: THC ratios.
4. Synthetic cannabis products, such as K2 and Spice, should be avoided.
5. Avoid smoking burnt cannabis and choose safer inhalation methods including vaporizers, e-cigarette devices and edibles.
6. If cannabis is smoked, avoid harmful practices such as inhaling deeply or breath-holding.
7. Avoid frequent or intensive use, and limit consumption to occasional use, such as only one day a week or on weekends, or less.
8. Do not drive or operate other machinery for at least 6 hours after using cannabis. Combining alcohol and cannabis increases impairment and should be avoided.
9. People with a personal or family history of psychosis or substance use disorders, as well as pregnant women, should not use cannabis at all.
10. Avoid combining any of the risk factors related to cannabis use. Multiple high-risk behaviours will amplify the likelihood or severity of adverse outcomes.

The [Government of Canada: FAQ Lower-risk cannabis use guidelines](#) answers some of the most common questions about the Lower –Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines (LRCUG).

Using cannabis during pregnancy may affect your baby. For information about the health risks of using cannabis before or during pregnancy:

- [The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada: Pregnancy Info](#)
- [Government of Canada: Thinking about using cannabis before or during pregnancy?](#)
- [Centre of Excellence for Women's Health: Women and Cannabis](#)

For more information about health risks and guidelines for safer use:

- [Centre for Addiction and Mental Health : Cannabis: What Parents/Guardians and Caregivers Need to Know](#)
- [Government of Canada: Thinking about using cannabis while parenting?](#)

Talking About Substance Use with Your Family

Talking openly and honestly with your children and family about complex issues like substance use can help build positive connections and enhance resilience. Refer to our [Parenting Articles](#) for advice on having conversations with your family.

For more information and resources on how to talk to your family:

- [Centre for Addiction and Mental Health: Blunt Truth, Useful tips about safer ways to use cannabis](#)
- [Early Psychosis Intervention Ontario Network: Cannabis IQ \(A Resource for Families\)](#)
- [Drug Free Kids Canada: Tips for Talking With Your Teen](#)
- [HeretoHelp: Cannabis Use and Youth \(a parent's guide\)](#)
- [Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction: Talking pot with youth](#)
- [Government of Canada: Talking with teenagers about drugs](#)
- [Government of Canada: Cannabis and your health](#)

Cannabis for Medical Purposes

Cannabis can be used for medical purposes to help treat the symptoms of certain medical conditions. Cannabis for medical purposes has been legal in Canada for several years. The Access to Cannabis for Medical Purposes Regulations have had minor changes with the introduction of legalized non-medical cannabis.

Our health topic on [Medical Cannabis](#) provides information on what medical cannabis is, what it is used for and how it is used. We also provide information on some of the risks of medical cannabis and how you can reduce your risk.

If you are suffering from a serious or debilitating illness, live in Canada and have a medical doctor's support, you can apply for [accessing cannabis for medical purposes from a licensed producer](#). To learn more, visit [Health Canada: Medical use of cannabis](#), call the Office of Medical Cannabis at 1-866-337-7705 or speak with your health care provider.

Laws and Regulations on the Use of Non-Medical Cannabis in British Columbia

Understanding the laws and regulations for non-medical cannabis in Canada and British Columbia will help British Columbians stay safe. New laws are in place to improve safety. For

example, changes to the Motor Vehicle Act give police more tools to remove impaired drivers from the road. Visit [Government of British Columbia: Cannabis](#) for information on the laws and regulations in British Columbia and Canada.

For more information about the laws and regulations:

- [Government of Canada: Cannabis and international travel](#)
- [Government of Canada: Cannabis and the border](#)
- [Government of Canada: Cannabis impairment](#)
- [Government of Canada: Consumer Information – Cannabis](#)
- [Government of Canada: Don't Drive High](#)
- [WorkSafeBC: Substance use & impairment in the workplace](#)
- [U.S. Customs and Border Protection: CBP Statement on Canada's Legalization of Marijuana and Crossing the Border](#)

Useful Resources

Alcohol and Drug Information and Referral Services

Alcohol & Drug Information Referral Service (ADIRS) provides free, confidential information and referral services to British Columbians in need of support with any kind of substance use issue (alcohol or other drugs). Referral to community substance use treatment services is available for all ages.

Contact ADIRS toll-free at 1-800-663-1441, or in the lower mainland at 604-660-9382. Free, multilingual telephone help is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

British Columbia Drug and Poison Information Centre

If you think someone might have been poisoned by any substance, medicine or chemical, call the [Poison Control Centre](#). The Poison Control line is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call 604-682-5050 or 1-800-567-8911 (toll-free in B.C.) Telephone interpreting is available in over 150 languages.

Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction

The [Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction](#) provides evidence-based guidance to decision on substance use in Canada. Learn about discussing cannabis use, cannabis and youth, recent research on cannabis and more.

Crisis Line Association of BC

The Crisis Line Association of BC is the provincial association representing member crisis lines from across British Columbia. Call for emotional support, crisis and suicide assessment and intervention, and resource information.

- [1-800-SUICIDE \(1-800-784-2433\)](tel:1-800-784-2433): call if you are having thoughts of suicide, or know someone who is. The service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and in up to 140 languages. Operated in partnership with the Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre of BC.
- [310-Mental Health \(310-6789 - no need to dial an area code\)](tel:310-6789): call if you need emotional support, information and resources specific to mental health in British Columbia. The service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and is toll-free anywhere in British Columbia.

Foundry

[Foundry](#) is a province-wide network of integrated health and social service centres for people ages 12-24. Foundry centres provide mental health care, substance use services, primary care, social services and youth and family peer supports. Visit a local [Foundry Centre](#).

HeretoHelp

[HeretoHelp](#) is a project of the BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions Information. Seven leading mental health and addictions non-profit agencies work together to help people live well and better prevent and manage mental health and substance use problems.

- [HeretoHelp: Cannabis Use and Youth \(A parent's guide\)](#)
- [HeretoHelp: Learn About Cannabis \(marijuana\)](#)
- [HeretoHelp: Safer Cannabis Use-Marijuana, hash, hash oil](#)

Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre

[Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre](#) provides mental health and substance use information, resources, help navigating the mental health system and peer support to children, youth and their families from across British Columbia.

Contact the Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre by phone at 1-800-665-1822, in person at BC Children's Hospital (Mental Health Building, 4555 Heather Street, Vancouver, BC, Room P3-302 (3rd Floor)) or by email at keltycentre@cw.bc.ca.

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