

Frequently Asked Questions on www.CannabisResource.com

Periodically I review my site visitors' search terms, to see what you're looking for. Some searches show up a lot. When that happens, I try to provide answers here. If you have more specific questions, you can also e-mail me at: awizards@awizardslife.com. - mgw

Two Basic Facts About Cannabis/Marijuana Use:

A. No matter how you use it (in tea, cake, butter, vodka, or any other food or drink), eating or drinking cannabis can get you high and have all of the effects of smoking marijuana.

It usually takes a little longer to work, the effects may last a little longer, and the "high" may not feel exactly the same, but it will still lower your blood pressure and intra-ocular (inside the eye) pressure, relieve asthma, relieve pain, etc. It can also trigger anxiety, dry mouth, or other occasional negative effects. [Cannabis' effects pass rapidly.](#)

B. Despite its fleeting effects, cannabis use can be detected for weeks after exposure. Compounds in cannabis are saved in fat cells and only gradually released in urine. With current technology, marijuana use may be detected with urine, saliva, or hair tests. Urine tests can detect use up to 4 weeks after the most recent exposure. This is true whether the weed was eaten or smoked.

(For more information on urine tests, see the pdf on www.CannabisResource.com.)

1. "What are the effects of marijuana tea?"

A tea or infusion made simply by steeping cannabis flowers and leaves in hot water won't have much effect at all; if anything, it will be slightly calming and sedative.

Tea made with a spoonful or two of butter added to the teapot can have an effect similar to that of eating marijuana brownies. Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), marijuana's main psychoactive ingredient, dissolves in fats but not in water. *Much depends on the quality and amount of marijuana used.* In general, ingesting marijuana orally takes more time to produce effects, and effects are usually milder than those from smoking ganja, but are similar overall. However, effects may be equally as strong in some people, and may be longer-lasting. Use caution until you know how eating or drinking cannabis affects you!

An infusion made with butter as described here, consumed regularly, will exert the same physical effects as smoking cannabis, lowering blood pressure by dilating veins.

2. "Can I use marijuana before an eye exam?" or "Can I use marijuana before a physical?"

People keep asking about cannabis and EYE EXAMS in particular. Don't see your eye doctor, or your physician, either, within several hours of using cannabis - preferably at least 12 - if you don't want to waste time and money! Marijuana lowers blood pressure, and intra-ocular (inside the eye) liquid pressure, by dilating veins, allowing fluids to move

more easily. Using it before an eye exam could hide symptoms of glaucoma. Using it before a medical exam could hide high blood pressure. Have your medical check-ups straight and sober!

NOTE: Several recent questions have made it clear that people are worried about using marijuana before an eye exam or other physical exam NOT because it might affect medical test results, but because they're afraid their doctor will know they've used it! This is really sad.

#1. The doctor-patient relationship is legally private. Your doctor cannot rat you out.

#2. If you have a doctor who you think might rat you out if s/he could, CHANGE DOCTORS! Don't trust your health to a practitioner you don't trust with your life!

#3. Even insurance companies do not give a hoot if you use cannabis. One insurance executive told Cannabis Resource, "If we tested for cannabis, we couldn't sell any insurance. Insurance urine tests gather information about serious illnesses, not pot use. People in all walks of life use marijuana."

See the brochure on www.CannabisResource.com on **How to Use Medical Marijuana** for more information!

3. "What is the legal status of marijuana in Costa Rica?"

Having marijuana is very illegal in Costa Rica, as are growing or selling it. Most nations that are economically dependent on the US have been forced to pass prohibition laws, and the "drug war" in these countries is often funded in part by US taxpayers, so that arms and military manufacturers can make money selling products to the police and military of these other nations. Are they at least US arms and military manufacturers? You tell me: what do you call a company with an office in Virginia, another in Dubai, and its bank accounts in Switzerland?

Only Ecuador has legalized marijuana completely, and it is a government monopoly there.

4. "Is marijuana tea useful for relieving asthma?"

Marijuana relieves acute asthma attacks, but I haven't found any specific references to using marijuana tea for this purpose.

THC dilates bronchial passages in the lungs and relaxes muscles, easing breathing. Conventional asthma medicines are also bronchodilators. Both smoked and oral cannabis can relieve attacks, but with oral ingestion, it's longer before effects are felt, a disadvantage in an asthma attack. *However, cannabis' immuno-modulating effects may be useful for long-term treatment of many chronic auto-immune and/or inflammatory diseases, including asthma. It is here that marijuana tea, regularly consumed, might help prevent attacks. (See preparation recommendations in #1 above.)*

* **Note** that THC may have an adverse interaction with ephedrine, which is (or was) used in some anti-asthma medications. Ephedrine use is now restricted in the US; check prescribed or over-the-counter medications' ingredients. *

Marijuana was used historically in Mexican folk medicine for asthma. This was the first medical use for cannabis reported in the US. Marijuana tinctures, for asthma and other conditions, were popular in the US before 1937, when prohibition came along. Cannabis was even used in "asthma cigarettes"! There has been at least one unsuccessful attempt to develop a THC droplet inhaler for asthma, but US cannabis research lags far behind other countries', due to prohibition. There seems to be no current research on asthma and cannabis.

(Some information in this response comes from the *Medical Marijuana Handbook*, Rosenthal, Gieringer & Mikuriya, 1997, Quick American Archives, Oakland, CA; and from *The Benefits of Marijuana*, Bello, 2000, Lifeservices Press, Boca Raton, FL).

5. "How can I make a cannabis tincture?"

Herbal tinctures are extracts of the fresh or dried plant made with calculated mixtures of water and ethanol alcohol. A resinous herb such as cannabis might need 80-90% ethanol. The strength of tinctures is stated as the ratio of the metric herbal weight to the metric volume of solvent used; that is, a 1:5 tincture is one in which 1KG herb yields 5L tincture. The plant material is soaked in the solution for 2-4 weeks, strained, bottled, labeled with date and alcohol content, and stored in a cool, dark place.

Herbal tinctures are generally stronger than teas or infusions, and medicinal doses are measured in milliliters (mL) rather than cups. Tinctures should not be used by pregnant women, children, or anyone with a history of alcohol abuse.

Tinctures may be made with any alcoholic spirit, but alcohol content of the spirit must be taken into account in determining the ratio of alcohol to water in the solution. For example, vodka has 40% alcohol, while brandies range between 36-60%. I'm not going to attempt the "higher math" to figure out how much brandy + how much water would = how much cannabis tincture; these FAQs would start to read like a holiday e-mail "fruit cake recipe"!

Personally, I have never made or tried a cannabis tincture, and have not been able to find much in the literature about them. As with so many herbal medicines, research on cannabis and the many ways it can be used therapeutically is sorely lacking!

6. Will a marijuana compress relieve arthritis pain? Will it make the patient "high"?

While cannabis is smoked and/or ingested by many to relieve pain of arthritis, among many other chronic conditions for which conventional medicine offers only risky choices, it is difficult to see how a cannabis compress would exert any beneficial effects beyond those of warmth, that could be achieved by a warm compress alone.

There is no evidence for any of marijuana's compounds being absorbed through the skin. A marijuana compress would not cause anyone to feel high.

There is evidence, however, for cannabis compounds being absorbed through the mucous membranes, and a new cannabis-based medication, Sativex®, is being prescribed in Great Britain and Canada, and is undergoing testing in the US. Sativex is a whole-herb extract taken sub-lingually (under the tongue) using a dose-metered spray pump.

7. Using cannabis sometimes makes me feel anxious and paranoid. What can I do about this reaction?

Many cannabis users have experienced anxiety and paranoia one or more times. This is perfectly normal, and is most likely caused by the heightened awareness of surroundings and physical sensations experienced with marijuana. That is, you are more aware of everything going on around you and within you!

To prevent such anxiety attacks, the most important thing you can do is to use marijuana in familiar, calm, safe locations, with friends you know and trust. If you're in a chaotic or unfamiliar place, or with people you've just met or don't much like, natural feelings of discomfort - even shyness! - may escalate into anxiety.

Also, *remind yourself that you used marijuana* if you feel your heart beating and begin to worry it may forget how to do its job. It won't. And the high won't last, either.

To head off anxiety if it starts to appear, put on some music you love, take a brisk walk in the backyard, talk it over with your dog or cat, drink a big glass of water (dehydration may be a factor in anxiety), take a leak, wash your face, or eat a peanut butter-and-jelly sandwich. Talk about what's going on in your head; that's what friends are for! Hugs are a strong antidote to anxiety, take as needed!

However, it's OK to remember that *feeling paranoid doesn't mean "They're NOT out to get you!"* Cannabis use and possession is still illegal in the US and in many other countries. Especially if you indulge in a public place, exercise moderation; keep your wits about you and your behavior within publicly-acceptable boundaries. If you know yourself, and can examine your feelings with some degree of detachment, you may learn that sometimes that little voice inside yelling, "ALARM! ALARM! ALARM!" is telling you something you need to heed!

Worrying that "today's cannabis is too strong" is a sure fire path to paranoia. Today's specially cultivated medical-quality herb indeed has more THC in it. But you can only get so high, and no higher. The body's ability to absorb and respond to THC before it is metabolized is limited. If you haven't gotten high in years, take it slow until you remember how to enjoy yourself responsibly!

8. What should I do if smoking cannabis before bedtime keeps me awake?

You know, this is one of those questions... *Don't smoke before bedtime if it keeps you awake!* No one is forcing you to smoke bud late at night, are they?

OK, say I have problems with late-night snacking. It's making me fat and gives me indigestion that keeps me awake! I have to get a handle on that and do what's best for *me*, not what I do on automatic pilot, or what anyone around me may be doing. You, too, my friends!

Otherwise, try any of these common relax-and-sleep methods: meditate, drink chamomile tea or warm milk, take a warm bath scented with lavender, or have a couple of nice orgasms.

9. What will relieve the feeling of "dry mouth" after smoking cannabis, and why does it happen?

To relieve "cottonmouth," DRINK WATER as needed! Coffee or tea's caffeine, soda's sugar and caffeine, or fruit juice's sugar will only make you thirstier. Smoking dries the throat, mouth, and nasal tissues and contributes to the thirsty feeling. Some of cannabis' active compounds also contribute to this effect.

Also - think about this - *if you are talking a lot, your mouth is open more, and has more opportunity to dry out.* Smoking cannabis makes some people very chatty! If you're one of them, remember to keep drinking water so your tongue doesn't stick to the roof of your mouth!

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