

## HOW TO CONSUME MEDICAL CANNABIS

**VAPORIZING:** In broad medical consensus, vaporizing is considered the easiest introduction to consuming cannabis, as well as one of the healthiest and most customisable ways to do so. When using a vaporizer, your herb is packed into a chamber; a sensor keeps watch as a heating element brings the chamber up to temp, and the therapeutic compounds start to vaporize. The vapor is then slowly inhaled, and should be held in the lungs for 3-5 seconds, if possible. For new users of cannabis, it's best to start with a low-THC strain (~5-10%), and wait at least 5 minutes to assess effects between doses.

More and more vaporizers released carry precise temperature controls, allowing you to adjust the temperature by degree. This function can help you get precise effects from your medicine - there are over 113 *cannabinoids* and 31 *terpenes*, all with different boiling points, and many of which possess therapeutic qualities.

Usually the best place to start is around  $188-199^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $370-390^{\circ}\text{F}$ ), but your ideal range will ultimately depend on your body's relationship with cannabis, and what effects you desire on mood and cognition. For example, if you wanted a more uplifting experience you could set your temperature to  $182^{\circ}\text{C}/360^{\circ}\text{F}$  - Beta Caryophyllene, Pinene and Limonene, terpenes responsible for mood elevation and focus, boil below  $182^{\circ}\text{C}/360^{\circ}\text{F}$ , but this temperature avoids the more sedative effects of CBN ( $185^{\circ}\text{C}/365^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) Linalool ( $198^{\circ}\text{C}/388^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) and Terpineol ( $219^{\circ}\text{C}/426^{\circ}\text{F}$ ).

For a comprehensive online resource about vaporization and boiling points, check out <http://vaporizertemp.com>.

**SUBLINGUAL/BUCCAL ADMINISTRATION:** One of the most promising ways to consume cannabis oil is sublingual (under the tongue) or buccal (between the gums and cheeks) administration. Cannabis oil is held sublingually or buccally for 45-60 seconds, allowing the active components to naturally diffuse. Tests show that administering cannabis this way typically delivers ~30% of the medicine or more to your body. Effects are felt much quicker than with edibles, and are more easily adjustable post-administration. Effects should be felt within 30 minutes, and will peak within 2 hours. As sublingual administration bypasses the liver, effects will be more mild and functional when compared to cannabis edibles. Buccal administration may be especially useful if you're prone to a gag or swallow reflex.

**TOPICALS:** There's been an unfortunately small scope of research focussed on topicals. Smoking, vaping, and ingesting cannabis have been used traditionally for symptom relief. Because cannabinoids are repelled by skin, topical formulations can't penetrate to the bloodstream - instead, topical cannabis formulations work to combat localized pain and inflammation by interacting with cannabinoid receptors in your skin, with a shorter duration of effects than edible or inhaled cannabis. Effects typically last 2-3 hours after application, and are *non-psychoactive*. Extended-release patches and creams and absorption enhancers may allow for extended-release formulations in the near future, but in the meantime a good schedule for treatment with cannabis topicals is one dose 4-6x per day.

**SUPPOSITORIES:** Suppositories are another relative newcomer to contemporary cannabis medicine, with few comprehensive studies having been conducted. Rectal administration bypasses the liver, and effects may last 2-8 hours. Early studies indicate proper rectal administration of cannabis may carry up to 70% of the medicine into your system, compared to  $\leq 44\%$  in vaporizing ~30% in sublingual administration, ~15% in smoking, and ~6% in edible cannabis (although other factors may make smoking cannabis and consuming edible cannabis' psychoactive effects feel more potent).

Suppository molds can usually be found at a local compounding pharmacy, and if not, online. Suppositories are typically ~1 inch and oblong, and made with solidified coconut oil, providing a fat for absorption and making administration smooth and simple. Suppositories may take up to 20 minutes to absorb fully, so try to refrain from any bathroom breaks immediately after dosing!

**EDIBLE CANNABIS:** Edible cannabis products, or “Edibles,” are food items containing a cannabis infused oil or fat. Edible cannabis products can take 30 minutes-2 to exhibit full effects, and in rare cases may take as long as 3 hours. Because of the way edible cannabis is metabolized, it will typically feel much stronger - more body-heavy, psychoactive, and sedative. Effects will depend on how much fat you’ve eaten prior to dosing, the speed of your metabolism, and your personal chemistry. ALWAYS start with a low dose of an edible, and wait at least 2 hours to assess effects before you take another dose. Edible cannabis products are usually only dosed 1-2x per day, though smaller and more frequent doses may be more suitable for your condition. Cannabis oil capsules are an easy alternative for those who want a more consistent dose, though they are often felt to be less potent than infused food items, and may need to be dosed more frequently.

**SMOKING:** Smoking is one of the most popular methods of consuming cannabis recreationally, but presents a few challenges in medical use. Byproducts such as tar, carbon monoxide, and carcinogens are produced. Although cannabis smoking hasn’t been shown to increase the risk of lung cancer, it can increase risk of bronchitis and other lung infections. Smoking may also feel more potent compared to vaporizing due to inhaled byproducts of combustion like carbon monoxide, terpenoids, and other degradation products, which can lend the experience a more psychoactive sensation.

While it can’t be explicitly recommended, patients at Cannabis Medical Centre are empowered to medicate however makes them feel most at ease. There are steps you can take to make smoking healthier. As we currently understand it, the healthiest way to smoke is to take small doses (less than a ¼ of a standard bowl) through a glass water pipe, or “bong” - the water will filter and cool the smoke, making it much less irritating to your esophagus and respiratory tract. Take small hits until you feel comfortably medicated.

It’s best to avoid joints and small glass pipes, as they produce hotter and harsher smoke, and are more difficult to dose accurately.