



Types of Cannabis:

Marijuana is generally defined as the dried female flowers of the hemp plant, *Cannabis sativa*. The most important distinction for *Cannabis sativa* varieties is between "Sativa" and "Indica." Their origin and effects are quite different from one another. There is amazing variation in the *Cannabis sativa* species, and amazing potential for its therapeutic use. The following is a general guide:

Active ingredients: (Cannabinoids)

There are approximately 60 identified cannabinoids and each of an infinite number of strains of cannabis has its own cannabinoid profile. The active cannabinoids each have unique physiological effects and many combinations actually appear to have synergistic and/or antagonistic effects.

Delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC):

Euphoric, stimulant, muscle relaxant, anti-epileptic, anti-emetic, anti-inflammatory, appetite stimulating, bronchio-dilating, hypotensive, anti-depressant and analgesic effects.

Cannabidiol (CBD):

Lessens the psychoactive effects of THC, sedative and analgesic effects.

Cannabichromene (CBC):

Promotes the effects of THC and has sedative and analgesic effects.

Cannabigerol (CBG):

Has sedative effects and anti-microbial properties as well as lowering intra-ocular pressure. CBG is the biogenetic precursor of all other cannabinoids.

Cannabinol (CBN):

A mildly psychoactive degradation of THC, it's primary effects are as an anti-epileptic, and to lower intra-ocular pressure.

Cannabis sativa *Indica*

Appearance:

- shorter, stockier plant reaching heights of 1-2 metres
- wide, deeply serrated leaves
- dense flower clusters (tight buds)

Effects (lower THC, higher CBN/CBD):

- generally more physical than cerebral (however, the relief of physical symptoms can have a positive psychological effect)
- sedation, pain relief and relaxation
- best for later in the day and bedtime
- perhaps better for anxiety than depression

Benefits Include:

- reduces pain
- relaxes muscles
- relieves spasms, reduces seizures
- reduces inflammation
- aids sleep
- reduces anxiety and stress
- reduces nausea
- stimulates appetite
- reduces intra-ocular pressure
- bronchio-dilator and expectorant

Cannabis has been proven helpful in relieving the symptoms of thousands of conditions, including:

- pain from various ailments and injuries
- multiple sclerosis - Hepatitis C
- fibromyalgia - HIV/AIDS
- mental/emotional health issues including anxiety, stress, depression, hyperactive and hormonal disorders
- nausea and low appetite
- cancer and chemotherapy
- crohn's, colitis, IBS, other digestive
- muscular dystrophy, epilepsy, parkinson's
- asthma, emphysema,
- glaucoma and other intra-ocular disorders
- skin diseases such as pruritis and psoriasis
- back pain and muscle spasms
- paraplegia and quadriplegia
- insomnia and other sleep disorders

Cannabis sativa *Sativa*

Appearance:

- taller, lankier, potentially reaching heights of over 5 metres
- narrow serrated leaves
- loose flower clusters

Effects (higher THC, lower CBN/CBD):

- more stimulating and uplifting
- best for use in daytime

Benefits Include:

- reduces nausea
- stimulates appetite
- fights depression
- positive, uplifting, cerebral effect
- energizes and stimulates
- promotes creativity
- relieves headaches and migraines
- relaxes muscles, relieves pain
- bronchio-dilator and expectorant

Hybrids, Strains & Dosage

Most cannabis seeds and medicine available today are from hybrids - crosses of *Sativa* and *Indica* varieties. This allows cultivators to enjoy and select for various desired characteristics of growth, appearance and effect. The genetics and hence the effects of one lineage will usually be dominant. For example: *Indica*-dominant crosses are for pain relief, with the *sativa* component helping with energy and activity levels. *Sativa*-dominant crosses are good for stimulating appetite, with the *indica* component helping to reduce body pain and increase relaxation.

The efficacy of cannabis is directly related to strain selection. Care should be taken when selecting strains that will benefit you. Potency and dosage vary with different strains, conditions and individuals. The idea is to consume as little as possible of the most appropriately potent strains available in order to reduce costs and potential side effects.

Safe Use

Cannabis may impair your ability to drive or operate machinery. Cannabis mixed with alcohol may magnify the effects of alcohol, and may also cause nausea. Those receiving digitalis or other cardiac medications should use cannabis under careful supervision by a medical doctor. With any system of delivery, the individual should investigate their personal levels of tolerance and effect. Cannabis foods should be eaten by starting with a small bite, then waiting at least an hour before eating more. If too much cannabis is consumed remember that nobody has ever died from it, just relax in a comfortable spot and drink something sweet, it won't take long to wear off.

Improper storage, method of delivery, or quality control can lead to lung problems. Never share cannabis in such a way as to allow the transmission of pathogens. Cannabis grown with great care taken regarding choice of nutrients (organic or otherwise) and other practices, will help avoid potential toxicity; especially important for people with compromised immune systems. NEVER consume wet (stems must snap) or mouldy cannabis. Always buy properly cured, additive-free, well-grown cannabis.

Side Effects

There are some side effects of cannabis that can be mitigated with awareness. Cannabis may cause; dizziness, drowsiness; decreased co-ordination & cognition; short term memory loss; anxiety and/or paranoia. It may have psychoactive effects (a 'high'); the initial rise in heart rate and/or blood pressure may be problematic for those with nerve or heart conditions or severe anxiety. Orally ingested cannabis tends to take effect slower and lasts longer than smoked cannabis. People with liver problems should perhaps not eat cannabis. There are no significant withdrawal effects when use is decreased or ceased.