



People all over the world have used cannabis for thousands of years for social, medical and spiritual reasons. People use cannabis to enhance their quality of life when they feel its effects are beneficial.

Whether eating, vaporizing, smoking, using a tincture or a topical preparation, cannabis affects everyone differently. This information outlines potential risks and gives suggestions for how to take care of yourself if you choose to use cannabis.



to learn more, please visit

[www.carbc.ca](http://www.carbc.ca)  
[www.vch.ca](http://www.vch.ca)



# TAKE CARE



# WITH CANNABIS

## GO EASY ON YOUR LUNGS

It only takes a few seconds for your lungs to absorb cannabis. Deep inhalation and breath-holding may lead to pain and breathing troubles. It also increases the amount of toxic by-products brought into the lungs without significantly increasing the desired effect. If smoking, take shallow inhaleds and exhale right away. Vaporizing causes less lung irritation than smoking.

## ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR AGE

Young brains are still developing during adolescence and early adulthood. Regular and heavy use of cannabis at an early age may affect brain development with lasting consequences. Carefully weigh the potential benefits of using cannabis with the potential harm to the developing brain. If you are thinking about using cannabis, consider delaying use until late adolescence or early adulthood.

## STAY SAFE IF IMPAIRED

Cannabis may impair coordination, reaction time and other cognitive abilities. This may be pronounced in occasional and novice users or those using higher dosages or stronger strains. If impaired by cannabis, avoid driving or engaging in other potentially dangerous activities as it may increase the risk of injury or death. To be safe, wait at least 3 hours after inhaling or 6 hours after ingesting.



## USE SMALL AMOUNTS

It's ideal to use as little cannabis as is necessary to reach the desired effect. Many people find a small amount to be enough. Instead of smoking a whole joint or taking puffs each time a joint comes around, take one or two small puffs and wait to see how you react. If eating cannabis, start with a small bite and wait to feel the effects.

## WAIT TO FEEL FULL EFFECTS

Dosage can make a big difference between getting the desired effects and feeling uncomfortable or anxious. Wait at least 10 minutes to feel the full effects of inhaled cannabis and at least an hour to feel the full effects of eaten cannabis. Consider the effects and then decide whether you want to use more.

## NOTE EFFECT OF STRAIN

Different strains of cannabis have different effects on the body and the mind – some are more stimulating and some are more relaxing. If using an unfamiliar strain, sample a small amount to see how you react in order to avoid undesired effects.

## AVOID TOXIC EFFECTS

Eating too much cannabis, using strong extracts, or mixing it with alcohol can cause extreme anxiety, nausea, vomiting and fainting. It's easier to control your dose when you inhale, rather than eat cannabis. Avoid consuming cannabis with alcohol. Using cannabis on a full stomach can help moderate the intensity of negative effects. If you feel too high, don't panic, stay hydrated, eat something, and find a safe place where you feel comfortable. The effects will wear off within 2 to 8 hours.

## MIND YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Cannabis may relieve some symptoms caused by depression and anxiety or it may make them worse, possibly leading to temporary psychosis including paranoia and hallucinations. It may also trigger the onset of schizophrenia in those already vulnerable. Such effects may be related to strain, dosage, or individual biochemistry. Cannabis is not a good fit for everyone. If you have a mental health condition, or a personal or family history of schizophrenia, it is extremely important to consider the potential risks of using cannabis.

## CARE ABOUT QUALITY

Because cannabis is illegal, it is unlikely that the products you get will be tested for biological or chemical contaminants. Some contaminants, like mold and mildew, may be visible to the eye. Try to find organically grown cannabis and carefully assess the quality of what you consume.

## SHARE CAREFULLY

Contact of shared joints or other implements with the lips increases the risk of spreading saliva-borne infections such as meningitis, the flu and other germs. If sharing, hold joints or implements in a way that you can inhale the smoke or vapour without touching them to your lips.

