

# CBD Oil: What does a toxicologist want you to know?

Get the Facts! From the Blue Ridge Poison Center at UVA Health



CBD stands for cannabidiol (pronounced can-uh-bid-EYE-all), a chemical extracted from the hemp plant. Hemp is very similar to the cannabis (marijuana) plant. Cannabis contains CBD too, as well as an additional chemical called tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, which gives cannabis its psychoactive properties. Hemp contains almost no THC.

CBD does not cause any of the psychoactive effects associated with cannabis. Neither hemp nor CBD can make a user 'high.'

Cancer. Chronic pain. Epilepsy. Multiple sclerosis. Stress. Anxiety. Sore muscles. Acne. Insomnia. Inflammation. Menstrual cramps. Arthritis. Depression. High blood pressure. Alzheimer's disease. Parkinson's disease. Schizophrenia. Addiction. Diabetes. Irritable bowel syndrome. Smoking cessation. These are all conditions that some people say can be helped by CBD oil. This product is surging in popularity and can be purchased in many forms including pills, tinctures, skin creams, cosmetics, food, beverages, powders, massage oils, and suppositories. There are even products for pets. But does this "miracle drug" really work? Is it safe?

Researchers have been looking at the possible therapeutic uses of CBD. The strongest scientific evidence so far is for its effectiveness in treating two childhood epilepsy syndromes: Dravet syndrome and Lennox-Gastaut. In numerous studies, CBD was able to reduce the number of seizures, and in some cases it was able to stop them altogether. Recently the FDA approved the first (and only) prescription CBD medicine for these conditions, Epidiolex. There is some evidence that CBD may help with other conditions, too, particularly chronic pain, inflammation, anxiety, and insomnia. But results are mixed. There is a lack of quality studies done on humans, and a lack of long-term safety data. More studies are needed.



The Blue Ridge Poison Center at UVA Health  
1-800-222-1222 [www.brpc.virginia.edu](http://www.brpc.virginia.edu)  
Treatment. Education. Prevention.

## CBD Oil (continued from front)



LEFT: Cannabis (marijuana)

RIGHT: Hemp

### What is the harm in trying it?

- CBD products are not regulated. There is no way to know for certain what the purity or concentration of a particular product is, regardless of what its label says.
- Several studies have shown that the concentration of CBD in a product was often much higher or lower than the label said.
- Some CBD products were found to contain undisclosed THC, the active compound in cannabis. This could lead to users experiencing unintended changes in mood, thought, or behavior; suffering injuries; or even **failing urine drug screens**.
- Some CBD products have been found to be contaminated with pesticides, heavy metals such as lead and arsenic, molds, or bacteria.
- Side effects of CBD have been reported and include nausea, fatigue, diarrhea, weight changes, and irritability.
- The drug may interact with some over-the-counter (OTC) medicines or dietary supplements. CBD may also affect the liver's ability to break down toxins.

Those who want to try CBD should first discuss it with their primary health care provider. List all medications and supplements so that drug interactions can be avoided. If any unexpected symptoms arise, stop taking CBD and seek medical advice.



WHO CAN HELP? Specially trained nurses and doctors are standing by 24 hours a day, every day. Call the **Blue Ridge Poison Center: 1-800-222-1222**. Free and confidential.

**Scan the code, save the number. You could save a life.**