

Methods of Consumption and Dosing Recommendations

There are many different ways to consume marijuana. The most commonly practiced methods of consumption include smoking, vaporization and ingestion. Other methods of consumption include topical absorption, transdermal absorption, vaginal and rectal uptake. Each method has its own set of benefits and setbacks. Several factors must be considered when determining which method of consumption is right for you. These factors include desired onset and duration of effects, body weight, metabolism rates, other medical conditions, and personal preferences. Below you will find detailed descriptions of each consumption method.

Inhalation Methods

Smoking

While many other consumption methods are increasing in popularity, smoking remains the most commonly practiced. To smoke cannabis, you must first take marijuana flower buds and either roll them into a paper or pack them into a pipe. This is more easily accomplished if the buds are first broken up or grinded into smaller pieces. You will then apply a flame directly to the plant material and lightly inhale. Smoking cannabis results in a rapid onset (< 5 minutes) and effects generally last 1 – 3 hours. First time marijuana users should begin with 1 small puff. Effectiveness may be evaluated after 15 minutes and if desired effects have not been achieved, dose may be repeated. Frequent smoking of any substance can lead to unwanted side effects such as damage to throat and lungs, trouble breathing, and even cancer. Smoking is best when practiced infrequently.

Vaporization

Vaporization is an alternative method of inhalation that has seen a great increase in popularity in recent years. Rather than applying a flame directly to the plant matter, vaporization involves use of a device that is designed to heat the product at a lower, more ideal temperature so vaporization may occur. Vaporization is considered to be a more efficient inhalation method than smoking because less product is burned up and wasted. Marijuana flower and concentrates may both be vaporized, with separate devices intended for each. Similarly to smoking, vaporization results in a rapid onset (< 5 minutes) and effects generally last 1 – 3 hours. First time marijuana users should begin with 1 small puff. Effectiveness may be evaluated after 15 minutes and if desired effects have not been achieved, dose may be repeated. Extra precaution should be used when vaporizing marijuana concentrates due to elevated potencies.

Ingestion Methods

Digestion or Gastrointestinal Uptake

Products: Chocolate, gummies

Digestion is when you eat or drink a marijuana infused food or beverage. During this process the ingested substance must be metabolized by the liver and small intestine before entering the blood stream. As a result, the effects of digested marijuana will be delayed, with onset generally occurring 1-2 hours after ingestion. First time users should begin with a dose of 5mg or less. Effectiveness may be evaluated after 2 hours and dose may be repeated if desired effects have not been achieved.. Effects may be felt for 4-6 hours, and sometimes even longer. For most individuals, the psychoactive effects after digestion of marijuana are stronger than those produced from inhalation. Individuals who experience liver or GI issues should be extra cautious when using this method.

Sublingual Administration or Oral Uptake

Products: Lozenges

Sublingual administration is when a substance is absorbed into the bloodstream through tissues under the tongue or in the sides of the mouth. Sublingual edibles generally have a faster yet more steady onset (< 1 hour) than digested edibles because they do not need to be processed by the liver and small intestine. First time users should begin with a dose of 5mg or less. Effectiveness may be evaluated after 1 hour and dose may be repeated if desired effects have not been achieved. The effects generally last 2-4 hours. This method may be optimal for individuals who experience liver and/or GI issues, or those looking for quicker onset of effects.

Nano-Emulsion

Products: Nano tincture spray

A Nano-Emulsion is created when the active components of cannabis (cannabinoids) are broken down into microscopic particles. These tiny, water soluble particles allow for quicker and more efficient absorption. When used orally, Nano products may begin to take effect in less than 5 minutes, with the duration lasting 1.5 – 3 hours. First time users should begin with a dose of 5mg or less. Effectiveness may be evaluated after 30 minutes and dose may be repeated if desired effects have not been achieved. Due to the superior absorption of Nano particles, most individuals will find that just a ¼ or a ½ of their typical dose is required to achieve the same effectiveness.

This information is not to be considered as medical or legal advice, and absolutely should not be relied on as such. **WARNING: Marijuana has not been analyzed or approved by the FDA. There is limited information on the side effects of marijuana, and there may be health risks associated with its use. Marijuana and marijuana products should always be kept away from children. Driving is prohibited and machinery should not be operated when under the influence of marijuana.**

Topical Absorption

Products: Lotion, balm, massage oil

Topical application of cannabis is intended for localized relief, with the effects being felt only at the site of application. When using topicals, cannabinoids are not absorbed into the bloodstream in significant amounts therefore psychoactive effects will not be experienced. It generally takes 20 minutes to 1 hour to begin feeling the effects of a topical application, and the effects may last up to 4 hours. First time users should begin with a dose of 25mg or less. Effectiveness may be evaluated after 1 hour and dose may be repeated if desired effects have not been achieved.

Transdermal Absorption

Product: Transdermal Patches

Transdermal absorption occurs when cannabinoids are absorbed through the skin into the bloodstream. Since cannabinoids do enter the bloodstream, psychoactive effects will be experienced when THC is present. Transdermal methods are intended to affect areas throughout the body, not only at the site of application. Onset generally occurs 20 to 60 minutes after application, and effects may last 10 – 12 hours. First time users should begin with a dose of 25mg or less. If undesired effects are experienced, transdermal patch may be removed and effects will subside within 30 minutes. Effectiveness may be evaluated after 1 hour and if desired effects have not been achieved, a stronger dose may be required.

Dosing Recommendations

Regardless of the method you choose, first time users should always begin by taking the lowest possible dose (<5mg) to assure you will not experience unwanted side effects. The goal should be to use the lowest dose that produces the desired effect. You should only increase your dose when a given amount has proven to be ineffective. Too much marijuana can have unwanted side effects, including dry mouth, dry eyes, anxiety, paranoia, weight gain, and fatigue. Body weight and metabolism should always be taken into consideration when choosing your dose.

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