



How to Use Cannabis Without Getting High

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We worked with *Hempseley* to create the *How to NOT get High with Cannabis* video series to **help you feel confident shopping for and using cannabis without a fear of getting “high.”** This series is great for anyone who wants to:

- 1 Try cannabis for the first time without fear of getting “too high”
- 2 Learn how to use cannabis in ways that allow you to retain focus and clarity during the day
- 3 Share how cannabis could benefit a loved one without suggesting they get “high”

Watch the videos at myfeelstate.com/how-to-not-get-high-series

01: Hemp & CBD Products

CBD is a cannabinoid, which is a compound found naturally both within our bodies and in the cannabis plant. It supports our endocannabinoid system (ECS), which is responsible for keeping us balanced.

Unlike THC that binds to and stimulates endocannabinoid receptors primarily located in the brain and central nervous system, **CBD’s primary function is slowing the breakdown of our body’s naturally produced cannabinoids so that our bodies can use more of them.** This means that CBD, on its own, cannot get you “high.”

CBD is found in cannabis, which includes both marijuana and hemp. **When derived from hemp, which is defined as cannabis with less than 0.3% THC, it can legally be sold nationwide.**

02: Consume Raw Cannabis

Did you know that unless cannabis is heated, it won’t produce intoxication?

This is why cannabis is often smoked and decarboxylated or “toasted” before making edibles or other ingestible products.

When developing in the cannabis plant, THC starts out as THCA. **This acidic cannabinoid is not intoxicating because**

its molecular structure makes it unable to “fit” into our cannabinoid receptors. It must be heated or “decarboxylated” before it can create a high — and THCA also has its own health benefits.

Unheated cannabis leaves and buds are rich in non-intoxicating cannabinoids and can be added to smoothies, salads, and sprinkled on dishes like any other herb. **It’s best to do this with fresh cannabis, so this method is great for patients who have their own at-home grows or caregivers who can provide raw cuttings.**

03: Finding your Minimum Effective Dose of THC

A “Minimum Effective Dose” (MED) is defined as the lowest amount of a substance that produces your desired effects. **With cannabis, this means supplementing any endocannabinoid deficiencies to balance your body.**

So how do you find your minimum effective dose (MED)? Because cannabis interacts with your ECS, your MED is impacted by your **endocannabinoid tone**, which refers to the overall health of this system. Endocannabinoid tone is dependent on many things:

1. Diet: Your body creates endocannabinoids from a balanced ratio of omega 3 and 6 fatty acids.

2. Exercise: Non-stressful exercise, such as yoga, boosts endocannabinoid production.

3. Stress levels: By staying in a chronic state of stress, our endocannabinoid system can’t keep up with re-balancing our bodies and becomes depleted.

4. Hormone levels: Endocannabinoid levels in women can fluctuate with the menstrual cycle, as endocannabinoid levels are strongly linked to estrogen levels.

When experimenting to find your MED, always start low and go slow. **You can always add more THC, so don’t be in a hurry.** Your starting dose will depend on the way you are consuming your THC — *check out our Chapter 03 blog post or Microdosing Handout for more information.*

04: CBD:THC Ratios

THC and CBD can both be powerful when used alone, but ideally, **we want to be using them together.** The *Ensemble or Entourage Effect* theorizes that all of the compounds in cannabis (cannabinoids, terpenes, flavonoids, and more) work best when used together, enhancing one another’s effects to maximize therapeutic benefits. **When it comes to using cannabis as a medicine, choosing a CBD:THC ratio has a big impact on the level of intoxication or “high” you experience.**

If you recall from Chapter 01, THC binds to endocannabinoid system receptors primarily found in our brain and central nervous system, which is why it can create intoxicating experiences — while CBD’s primary function is to slow the breakdown

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of our body's own naturally produced endocannabinoids so that we can use more of them.

But when THC is consumed with CBD, CBD is actually able to bind to our receptors as well — **and it changes their shape, weakening THC's ability to bind to the receptor and ultimately impacting how "high" we feel.**

When used together, **CBD can reduce the negative side effects of THC such as anxiety, paranoia, elevated heart rate, memory loss, and sluggishness** while THC can help to increase the therapeutic benefit of CBD.

So what's this look like in practice?

Most cannabis products fall into three general categories: THC-dominant (Type 1), Balanced (Type 2), and CBD-dominant (Type 3).

Generally speaking, if you don't want to get "high" then you should look for a CBD-dominant or balanced product, **but it's important to note that cannabis affects everyone differently;** depending on your condition and dosing, a THC-dominant product may be an effective medicine without producing a "high."

You can typically find CBD:THC ratios such as 1:1, 2:1, 1:2, 3:1 or even 10:1 or 20:1. When shopping, know that CBD-dominant products are relatively new; **ask your budtender to direct you to the CBD-dominant options in your dispensary.**

If you have no experience with THC and are particularly concerned about getting "high," then starting with the highest CBD:THC ratio available is the way to go. **Many medical patients have reported that a 20:1 CBD:THC ratio has been helpful for their symptoms without making them feel intoxicated at all.**

05: Suppositories

Suppositories are a unique way to use cannabis, falling into the "mucosal" category of consumption methods — but unlike tinctures that are absorbed orally, **suppositories are absorbed by the mucosa in either the vagina or rectum.**

Our pelvic region has a ton of nerves and important muscles that connect down the legs and up the spine, so this is a great area to target! Suppositories may be helpful for **lower back, hip or pelvic discomfort, menstrual aches, dryness, or other irritation in this sensitive area** — all without the side effect of feeling "high."

Studies suggest that when absorbed through the tissues in the rectum or vagina, THC isn't entering the bloodstream to be circulated throughout the entire body — instead, it takes effect just in that area, just like a topical would...but on the inside!

Now, it is important to note that a handful of people have reported experiencing "full-body highs" from suppositories, but most people find that they can use much higher doses of THC without feeling intoxicated. This makes them a great option for patients who need more support but don't want to feel high, as well as severely ill patients who can't take medicine orally.

When it comes to getting started with suppositories, **know that a single suppository may have anywhere from 20-80mg of THC, which is a much higher dose than anyone should ever start with when ingesting THC orally.**

Though cerebral intoxication is not expected with suppositories, even in high doses, **you should always start low and go slow, just like when using THC in any form.** You can cut a suppository into

pieces to get a starting dose that you are comfortable with based on your own experience, then slowly increase from there. If you are completely new to THC, a 10mg suppository is a great place to begin. **Since cannabis affects everyone differently, we recommend experimenting in a safe, supportive environment just in case you experience any new sensations.**

06: Topicals

Topicals include anything that is applied directly to the surface of the skin, such as balms, lotions, creams, or oils. **Cannabis topicals are popular for helping to reduce pain, inflammation, and muscle tension.**

When applied to the skin, the cannabinoids found in topicals typically won't reach the bloodstream because they are generally too big to pass through the skin. **Instead, topicals absorb into your skin and interact directly with nearby endocannabinoid receptors for direct, targeted relief.**

So how do topicals provide relief? When cannabinoids interact with our receptors, they suppress inflammation and prevent the immune system from turning on when it is not needed. **When a cannabis topical is put directly on an area of the body that needs relief, the cannabinoids can interact with receptors found in the skin, muscles, and other surrounding tissues to provide relief in that specific area.**

This means that the cannabinoids found in your topical products aren't likely to reach your brain and bind there to cause a "high" feeling — unless the product has been labeled "transdermal," which means it's been specifically designed to deliver cannabinoids through the skin and into the bloodstream.

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