

cannabis indica



Indica plants are normally shorter and stockier plants, reaching 1-2 metres in height with wide deeply serrated leaves and a compact and dense flower cluster.

The effects of *indicas* are predominantly physical although the relief of certain physical symptoms can have an emotional result as well. These effects can be characterized as **relaxing, sedating, and pain-reducing**. *Indicas* are generally best for later in the day and before bed.

some benefits:

- Reduces pain
- Relaxes muscles
- Relieves spasms
- Reduces inflammation
- Aids sleep
- Reduces anxiety and stress
- Reduces nausea
- Stimulates appetite
- Relieves headaches and migraines
- Reduces intra-ocular pressure
- Anti-convulsant
- Reduces seizure frequency
- Expectorant

active ingredients

The following information reflects the current knowledge, based on limited research:

Each strain of cannabis contains different ratios of “cannabinoids”, natural drug components, which work synergistically to provide its therapeutic effects.

The main active ingredient in marijuana is **delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)**. THC has euphoric, stimulant, muscle-relaxing, anti-epileptic, anti-emetic, anti-inflammatory, appetite stimulating, bronchodilating, hypotensive, antidepressant & analgesic effects.

High potency cannabis contains at least 15% THC. **Cannabidiol (CBD)** lessens the psychoactive effects of THC and has sedative and analgesic effects. **Cannabichromene (CBC)** promotes the analgesic effects of THC and has sedative effects.

Cannabigerol (CBG) has sedative effects and antimicrobial properties, as well as lowering intra-ocular pressure. It is the biogenetic precursor of the other cannabinoids.

Cannabinol (CBN) is a mildly psychoactive degradation of THC; its primary effects are to lower intra-ocular pressure and antiepileptic.

(in part from: Marijuana Medicine, Christian Ratsch, 2001)



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Effective Use of Medicinal Cannabis



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cannabis sativa



Generally, the *sativa* plant is the taller and lankier variety, reaching heights of over 5-6 metres. It is characterized by narrow serrated leaves and loose spear-like flower clusters that can be extremely resinous.

Primarily, the effects of *sativas* are on the mind and emotions. In this regard they tend to be more **stimulating, uplifting, energizing and creativity enhancing**. These benefits can be particularly helpful for the psychological component of many illnesses. *Sativas* are generally better for daytime.

some benefits:

- Reduces depression
- Relieves headaches and migraines
- Energizes and stimulates
- Reduces awareness of pain
- Increases focus and creativity
- Reduces nausea
- Stimulates appetite
- Supports immune system
- Expectorant

strain crosses



indica x sativa ~ sativa x indica

Hybrids are the result of cross-pollination of various strains. The characteristics, and hence the effects, of one strain will usually be dominant. For example, *indica*-dominant crosses are good 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.

modes of ingestion

- Self-titration is easiest with smoking cannabis. The effects are usually first felt within 30-60 seconds and develop fully within 5-15 minutes. These effects may last from 30 minutes to 3 hours. Take 1-2 puffs and wait 15 minutes in order to find the right dosage.
- The effects of ingested cannabis may be felt within the first 30 minutes to 2 hours (if the stomach is full, the effects may take longer) and may last for 2-8 hours. Effects from baked goods vary depending on what strain is used for the preparation, but tend to be somewhat more sedative and considerably more psychoactive. Due to strength,
- Cannabis preparations should be eaten by starting with a small bite, waiting an hour or two and, if needed, increasing the dose very gradually throughout the day.
- For tinctures, take 3 drops and wait 1 hour. Increase or decrease as needed. Tinctures may also be taken in drops under the tongue for an effect similar to smoked cannabis. They are made with various strains.

strain selection & dosage



The efficacy of cannabis is directly related to strain selection, therefore we recommend care be taken in selecting appropriate strains to meet your needs.

Potency varies with strains. In terms of dosage, the ideal is to smoke as little as possible in order to reduce costs and respiratory irritation. You will need to smoke less of a high-potency cannabis to reach the desired effect.

If you find yourself needing to smoke greater quantities or more often in order to achieve the desired effect, reduce or stop intake for a time. Changing the variety of cannabis normally used will also help you to return to a minimized effective dosage level.

NOTE: Ask us for advice on strain selection.

side effects

There are some effects of cannabis that are not therapeutic and can be mitigated through awareness:

- Cannabis may cause dizziness upon standing due to lowered blood pressure.
- Initial increase in heart rate and/or blood pressure may be problematic for those with heart conditions or severe anxiety.
- Cannabis may cause a decrease in coordination and cognition, and short-term memory loss while medicated.
- There are no significant withdrawal effects when cannabis use is ceased or decreased. However, symptom relief will also be decreased. Other herbs or natural healing methods may be used for symptom relief. See our Wellness Centre practitioners.
- Effects vary from person to person.

using the whole plant



Many of cannabis' active ingredients are extractable into fat and alcohol. Cannabis-infused oils, alcohol, and butters can be used for making baked goods and tinctures to provide relief to those who are unable to smoke, or as a preference, complement, or alternative to smoking.

The whole cannabis plant may be efficiently utilized. The flower ("bud") is the most potent part of the plant, therefore the bud is preferable for smoking. The leaves ("shake") and stems are less potent and should not be smoked. Shake is preferable for baking and tinctures since it is less costly and its potency is increased by these modes of ingestion.

NOTE: Edible products (cookies, butters, oils, and brownies) and tinctures are available at the BCCCS.

options for smoking

- Cannabis may be ground or cut and then rolled into a "joint". We recommend using hemp or rice-based rolling papers for both health reasons and to avoid using tree paper.
- Pipes can be used to avoid smoking paper and are useful when smoking small quantities. We recommend glass pipes.
- Water pipes can be used to cool the temperature of inhaled plant matter.
- Vaporizers can be used as a smokeless alternative and also provide a uniquely "clear" psychoactive effect.
- A blend of herbs that soothe the lungs can be smoked with cannabis.

NOTE: Hemp & rice rolling papers, glass pipes, water pipes, smoking blend, and vaporizers are available at the BCCCS.

use cannabis safely



- Do not drive or operate heavy machinery if *impaired* by cannabis (*indicas* can be especially sedating).
- Cannabis mixed with alcohol may cause vomiting and nausea.
- Those receiving digitalis or other cardiac medications should use cannabis under careful supervision by a medical doctor.
- Heavy smoking with no harm reduction techniques (i.e. smoking small amounts of high potency organic cannabis) may lead to respiratory irritation.
- Hold shared joints and other shared smoking implements so as not to touch your lips to them.
- Cultivators should properly dry the cannabis to minimize molds and fungi. Stems should break easily making an audible snapping sound.
- It is still illegal in Canada to possess, grow, or distribute cannabis. Know your rights and take precautions to avoid the harmful effects of arrest, cannabis seizure, imprisonment and criminal record.
- Choose organic cannabis whenever possible to minimize exposure to radioactivity and chemicals. This is especially important for people with compromised immune systems.

NOTE: Ask Compassion Club staff for more information about safe Cannabis use.



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