



# Live Well, Work Well

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## POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS TO CBD OIL

Cannabidiol (CBD oil) has become a popular subject in the media. You may have even noticed it steadily finding its way onto the shelves of health stores and coffee shops, or at stores that specialize in or exclusively sell it. While you may have heard many stories on the varying uses and effectiveness of CBD oil, it can be difficult to distinguish the truth from the fiction. In fact, there are many things about CBD oil that even experts have yet to fully understand.

### What Is CBD Oil?

CBD is a natural compound and the second most dominant ingredient in cannabis. While it can be extracted from the same plant as marijuana, it doesn't include tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) which is the ingredient that causes the symptoms associated with getting high. More commonly, however, it is extracted from hemp, which has very low levels of THC and is legal in the United States. As a result, while CBD cannot alter a person's state of mind, it can help the human body to function more effectively. Pure CBD oil consists of CBD dissolved in oil made from either hemp seeds or coconut.

### Legality of CBD

As of December 2018, the Agriculture Improvement Act made it legal for CBD to be extracted from hemp nationwide, though it must contain less than 0.3% THC to not be classified as marijuana. CBD extracted from other cannabis plants remains illegal on the federal level, but may be legal under state laws.

Additionally, each state has varying degrees of legal restrictions regarding CBD, and the federal government still technically considers it in the same drug class as marijuana.

As of 2015, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) relaxed requirements to allow researchers to conduct trials on CBD to better understand its impact on the human body. As a result of these trials, the FDA approved the first drug to contain purified CBD—called Epidiolex—in 2018 as a medication to treat certain types of epilepsy.

Selling food or drinks containing CBD is still illegal on the federal level due to concerns over the safety and unproven effects of its use in this capacity. Its legal status hasn't stopped some organizations from including CBD in their edible products or selling it as a dietary supplement.

### Health Benefits

Research into the effects of CBD is still relatively young, ongoing and limited due to legislation restrictions. However, there are several health benefits that CBD oil can offer and even more for which testing is incomplete but early results are promising.

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### Reducing Seizures

Evidence strongly supports CBD oil's effectiveness in treating seizures. Specifically, childhood epilepsy syndromes such as Dravet and Lennox-Gastaut, which don't usually respond to traditional antiseizure medications, saw a reduction or even complete elimination in the number of seizures in patients treated with CBD in numerous studies.

### Alleviating Cancer-related Symptoms

One popular argument for the legalization of marijuana has typically been that it helps to alleviate symptoms related to cancer and its treatment. Indeed, in a study of people with cancer-related pain, those treated with CBD and THC experienced significant pain reduction compared to those treated only with THC. Common chemotherapy side effects, such as nausea and vomiting, appear to also be relieved through a one-to-one combination of CBD and THC. Furthermore, animal studies suggest that CBD can prevent the spread of or even outright kill cancer cells, though it remains to be seen if this effect could translate to humans.

### Pain Relief

For anyone suffering from chronic pain, CBD can reduce inflammation and pain by helping naturally produced endocannabinoids respond to the immune system. Some studies have even found that CBD and THC could be effective in treating multiple sclerosis and arthritis pain.

### Reducing Anxiety and Depression

While both anxiety and depression are typically treated with pharmaceutical drugs, these drugs can sometimes be addictive, leading to substance abuse. CBD oil, however, is not addictive and has been shown in studies to reduce anxiety and cognitive impairment in situations that would typically increase both. CBD is also in early clinical trials for treating post-traumatic stress disorder.

### Other Possible Benefits

Scientists continue to study CBD and its effectiveness in treating a wide range of other ailments and their symptoms, such as the following:

- Acne
- Alzheimer's
- Blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Drug withdrawal
- Epilepsy
- Parkinson's disease
- Schizophrenia

### Potential Side Effects

While CBD is considered safe, it is not without its potential side effects. CBD could be especially harmful if taken with other medications.

The medication Epidiolex includes warnings that liver damage, lethargy, and depression or thoughts of suicide are possible side effects, though these are common of other epilepsy treatments. There is also evidence to suggest that nausea, fatigue, irritability, diarrhea, and changes in appetite and weight are possible side effects of CBD. However, there is not much currently known about any potential long-term side effects of CBD or its impact on brain development.

Of particular concern, however, is the fact that all CBD products currently on the market—aside from Epidiolex—are unregulated by the government, as the FDA does not regulate the safety and purity of dietary supplements. As a result, CBD products may have different amounts of ingredients than advertised, may have ingredients not advertised at all (e.g., THC) or may not include any CBD at all.

Because of this, it's important for you to talk to your doctor before trying any CBD products and become as well-informed on the products as possible.