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## Medical Marijuana: 10 Health Benefits of Cannabis

Medical marijuana has been around for a long time — as in, a *really* long time. The first mention of cannabis health benefits [dates back to 2900 BC](#), when Chinese Emperor Fu Hsi noted that *má* (the Chinese word for marijuana) was a “very popular medicine that possessed both yin and yang.” The earliest appearance in writing of cannabis used in healing can be found in the Rh-Ya, the 15<sup>th</sup> century BC Chinese Pharmacopeia. The Egyptians used ganja to treat inflammation and glaucoma, as well as including it in enemas. In other parts of the world, people used cannabis as an anti-phlegmatic, anesthetic and as a cure for leprosy (India); and as a remedy for edema, inflammation and earaches (Ancient Greece). Cannabis was heralded as one of the most important medicinal plants in the Zend-Avesta, an ancient Persian religious text, around 700 BC.

### Cannabis Medical Uses Today

Currently, medical marijuana is legal in 35 U.S. states, and there’s a wide range of afflictions it’s used to cure or treat. There have been many scientific studies that confirm what has been known anecdotally for years—that cannabis has some mighty powerful healing properties. Even the FDA has gotten on board, [approving the first CBD-based drug](#), Epidiolex, in 2018, which treats seizures associated with two rare forms of epilepsy. The FDA had [previously approved three synthetic cannabinoid medicines](#) — Marinol, Syndros and Cesamet (nabilone) — to treat nausea and vomiting in cancer chemotherapy patients and anorexia in people with AIDS.

### Top 10 Marijuana Health Benefits

There are many medical benefits of cannabis, but here are some of the most popular.

1. **Relieves Nausea and Vomiting** (especially for chemo patients) – THC, the cannabinoid that gets people high, also helps cancer patients to be more comfortable when going through difficult chemotherapy treatments. [A scientific study found](#) that patients who smoked cannabis demonstrated 70 to 100% relief from symptoms of nausea and vomiting. THC capsules were also effective, though not as much.
2. **Stimulates Appetite and Weight Gain** (especially for AIDS, anorexia nervosa and cancer patients) – the phenomenon of “the munchies” is well-known among ganja lovers, but there are official studies that back that up. It has been shown that [energy intake increases](#) with cannabis use, and another study found that [caloric intake rose by 40%](#) after smoking.

3. **Reduces Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Spasticity** – [Researchers have found](#) that individuals with MS who suffered from spasticity (stiffness and involuntary muscle spasms) found significant relief after smoking cannabis. It has also been [found to relieve neuropathic pain](#).
4. **Lessens Chronic Pain and Reduces Inflammation** – Cannabis has long been used for pain relief and [recent studies](#) have supported its effectiveness. The reason that it works to reduce pain is linked to the discovery of the [endocannabinoid system](#), a biological system in the human body of neurotransmitters that bind to cannabinoid receptors. This system regulates many physiological and cognitive processes, such as the sensation of pain, memory, appetite, mood, fertility, pregnancy, pre- and post-natal development and mediating the effects of cannabis. It has also been found to regulate the “buzz” one experiences during exercise. A [2013 scientific study](#) examined how the endocannabinoid system interacts with THC to alleviate pain and other symptoms. An earlier study [specifically addressed](#) the role of this system in conjunction with THC, an analgesic, in reducing inflammation and inhibiting pain responses.
5. **Relieves Headaches and Migraines** – Research has shown how activating the body’s endocannabinoid system [can also reduce headaches and migraine attacks](#).
6. **Reduces Intraocular Pressure (IOP) which may reduce the risk of Glaucoma** – Cannabis, in particular THC, has been [found to reduce IOP by about 24%](#). It has been estimated that by 2020, approximately 80 million people will have glaucoma, with approximately 3.2 million blinded by the disease. High IOP, along with age, genetics and race, is an indicator for glaucoma.
7. **Acts as an Anti-Depressant** – In 2007, researchers discovered that THC, when taken in low doses, [increased serotonin levels in the brain](#). Serotonin is a neurotransmitter that contributes to feelings of happiness and well-being.
8. **Helps with Insomnia** – Cannabis strains with higher quantities of THC [have been found to help people with insomnia](#), due to its sedative properties. Cannabis was also [found to be helpful for people suffering from PTSD](#).
9. **Slows the Progression of Alzheimer’s Disease** – THC has [been proven in a study](#) to be effective at inhibiting A $\beta$  aggregation. A $\beta$  aggregation leads to a loss of brain cells in Alzheimer’s disease.
10. **Kills Tumor Cells or Inhibits Their Growth** – [Several studies have shown](#) that both THC and CBD may slow down or stop the growth of tumors, and another study found that cannabidiol (CBD) can kill breast cancer cells.

[Many other studies](#) have examined the efficacy of cannabis in treating a wide range of symptoms, conditions and diseases. However, because even medical marijuana is still illegal under federal law, most studies have been conducted with animals rather than humans. Therefore, further studies are needed. In treating any condition with cannabis, we always recommend that you first consult your doctor!