

CANNABIDIOL (CBD) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Our team of board-certified pediatric neurologists understand firsthand the medical complexity pediatric patients require. Many families face difficult decisions understanding the latest research and recommendations for a variety of neurological diseases. Recently, cannabidiol (CBD) oil has received much attention as an option for reducing seizures, improving symptoms related to autism and muscle relaxation. Here are some of the most commonly asked questions about CBD oil for children.

What is prescription CBD?

CBD is only one of over 100 naturally occurring chemicals found in the cannabis plant. Cannabidiol (CBD) and Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) are the two most prevalent occurring phytocannabinoids in the plant. They are extracted from the marijuana plant and then dissolved in oil (typically MCT or Safflower Oil) this is then called CBD oil. When CBD oil is taken, CBD and THC bind with cannabinoid receptors in the human endocannabinoid system. The ratio of CBD and THC have varying effects on the body which are carefully selected by the prescribing physician. Prescription CBD is available from only three registered dispensaries in the state of Texas and is required to have low levels of THC (<0.5%). Other CBD found at local stores or online are not considered a prescription medication and are not regulated by the state.

What is the legality of CBD in Texas?

In June 2015, the Compassionate Use Act was passed which allowed low-THC medical cannabis to be used as a medical treatment for intractable epilepsy only. In June 2019, the Texas Compassionate Use Program was expanded, allowing medical cannabis to be prescribed by registered Texas physicians as a possible treatment for Texas residents with medical conditions other than intractable epilepsy. Both, the prescribing physician and patient are enrolled in a state regulated database. Only state registered physicians may create treatment plans and prescribe CBD to registered qualifying patients.

What types of conditions is CBD prescribed for?

Under the current Compassionate Use Program, patients in Texas are eligible to receive a prescription for medical CBD with low-THC if they have one or more of the following conditions:

- All forms of epilepsy and other seizure disorders
- Autism and other spectrum disorders
- Multiple Sclerosis (MS)
- Spasticity
- Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS)
- Terminal Cancer
- Alzheimer's Disease and other dementias
- Parkinson's Disease
- Huntington's Disease
- Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE)
- Over 100 other incurable neurodegenerative diseases

How is CBD administered?

In Texas, prescription CBD is available in three different delivery methods:

- tincture (oil)
- oral spray
- lozenge

Physicians work closely with families to establish which delivery method is right for each patient. Ideally, CBD is administered under the tongue or cheek pouch to allow for oral mucosa absorption. Swallowing the medication is acceptable but will result in a slower absorption of the medication that could result in less efficacy. CBD is often prescribed as once daily, twice a day or three times a day dosing. PRN or "as needed" dosing is also available in certain cases. CBD as a prescribed medication must be consistently dosed for optimal patient care.



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Are there side effects?

CBD has minimal negative side effects but like with most medications these can vary from patient to patient. The most common side effects include GI upset, diarrhea, somnolence, and sleepiness.

What are the benefits of CBD?

CBD has numerous reported benefits including: increased alertness, increased speech, developmental gains in milestones, reduced seizure frequency/severity, improved sleep, decreased anxiety, decreased disruptive behaviors, decreased agitation, improved cognition, improved appetite, happier disposition, calming effect and less GI discomfort from chronic constipation.

What about drug interactions?

CBD is a medication that is metabolized in the liver. These categories of medications are more accurately discussed by which liver enzymes break them down. CBD is broken down by CYP450. It can also inhibit or slow down these liver enzymes from breaking down other medications. These medications include:

- Antidepressants (such as fluoxetine, or Prozac)
- Medications that can cause drowsiness (antipsychotics, benzodiazepines)
- Macrolide antibiotics (erythromycin, clarithromycin)
- Heart medications (some calcium channel blockers)

For questions regarding your child's CBD prescription, contact the CBD Resource Clinic at Child Neurology Consultants of Austin at (512) 494-4000. The CBD Resource clinic offers in-clinic visits at all Child Neurology Consultants' locations: South Austin, Central Austin and Cedar Park. Learn more at ChildNeuroTX.com.

