

Forms of Marijuana

Smoked marijuana



Vaporizers



Edibles



Topicals



Concentrates



Shatter



Wax

BACKGROUND:

Marijuana has approximately 400-500 chemicals.¹ The marijuana plant has over 100 cannabinoids with Delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and Cannabidiol (CBD), which is the most prominent.² THC is the chemical in marijuana responsible for producing the euphoria or “the high.”² CBD is considered non-psychoactive and lacks the intoxicating properties of THC; however, there is evidence suggesting CBD may hold medicinal value to treat several medical conditions such as neurological disorders (i.e. seizures and epilepsy), psychosis, anxiety, movement disorders, and multiple sclerosis.³ Further studies are needed to validate the efficacy of such claims. In the 1960s-1970s, THC ranged between 1-3%. THC potency, today, continues to increase.⁴ Although the current national average is approximately 11% THC, Colorado and Washington’s recreational marijuana hovers around 17%, with some samples at 30% THC. This does not include high-potency extract concentrates, which can have 80-90% THC.⁵

STRAINS:

Cannabis Sativa and Indica are two primary recognized strains of marijuana; however, THC potency is determined by the quality (percentage of THC) and quantity of the resin it produces.⁶ Marijuana can be manipulated chemically and genetically by contaminants, growth enhancers, chemicals, pest control, and a variety of other means, including for business marketing purposes—to increase the THC.⁷ Sativa may cause more psychedelic intoxication, intense euphoria, and is more energizing than Indica.⁷ Indica may slow down the mind and body, provide pain relief, and sleep.⁷ Hybrid cannabis is a combination of the two primary varieties and may be Sativa or Indica dominant to create a combination of effects.⁸

PRODUCTS:

Marijuana Buds or Flower Clusters contain the largest concentration of THC while other parts of the plant such as leaves, seeds, twigs, stalk, and root contain much less.⁶ **Marijuana Concentrates** are highly potent products, which utilize solvents (e.g. ethanol, CO², isopropyl alcohol, and butane) to extract resins from the marijuana plant.⁶ THC content can exceed 90%. Among other names, marijuana concentrates are often referred to as wax, honey oil, butane hash oil (BHO), shatter, dabs, and 710 (the word “oil” flipped and spelled backwards).⁹ **Marijuana Edibles** are food and beverage items with marijuana added or infused with marijuana oils. These items may be very difficult to identify because their appearance is similar to non-marijuana products.¹⁰ Candies, baked goods, beverages, and ice creams are some examples of marijuana edibles (may also be known as “medibles”). **Marijuana Tinctures** are a liquid form of marijuana typically made from alcohol or glycerin and placed underneath the tongue.¹¹ **Marijuana Topicals** include lotions, balms, and salves (creams), which are applied to the outside of the body.¹¹

METHODS OF INGESTION:

Inhalation involves smoking and/or vaporizing, which is the fastest method of delivery. **Smoking** incorporates burning marijuana and inhaling the active and non-active components. **Vaporizing** does not burn the marijuana, but heats it to a temperature where the active and non-active ingredients are released as an aerosol and inhaled.¹² The effects of inhalation, smoking and vaporizing are almost immediate as cannabinoids enter the lungs, blood stream, and brain. Commonly associated paraphernalia used for smoking include cigarette-and-cigar papers, pipes, and water pipes. Vaporizers and vape pens may be used for vaporizing dry herbs and marijuana concentrates. **Oral** ingestion may be in the form of capsules, oils, and edibles. Oral ingestion is slower to take effect, but the effects can be stronger and last longer.¹² **Sublingual** ingestion is where marijuana enters the bloodstream when placed under the tongue or held in the mouth. Common examples include tinctures, lozenges, sprays, and dissolvable strips. Onset of effects is similar to oral ingestion.¹² **Topical** ingestion involves direct application of the cream to bare skin, which penetrate the skin and are unlikely to cause intoxication.¹²

HAS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT APPROVED MARIJUANA?

Although marijuana legalization exists in some states, marijuana remains a Schedule I controlled substance by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).¹³ Schedule I means the drug has a high potential for abuse, is not currently accepted for medical treatment, and lacks accepted safety practices.⁶ The Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has not approved marijuana as a safe and effective drug for any indication.¹⁴



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