

Potential Harm of CBD Products

CBD has the potential to harm you, and harm can happen even before you become aware of it.

- CBD can cause liver injury.
- CBD can affect how other drugs you are taking work, potentially causing serious side effects.
- Use of CBD with alcohol or other drugs that slow brain activity, such as those used to treat anxiety, panic, stress, or sleep disorders, increases the risk of sedation and drowsiness, which can lead to injuries.
- Male reproductive toxicity, or damage to fertility in males or male offspring of females who have been exposed, has been reported in studies of animals exposed to CBD.

Potential Side-Effects of CBD Products

CBD can cause side effects that you might notice. These side effects should improve when CBD is stopped or when the amount used is reduced.

- Changes in alertness, most commonly experienced as somnolence (drowsiness or sleepiness).
- Gastrointestinal distress, most commonly experienced as diarrhea and/or decreased appetite.
- Changes in mood, most commonly experienced as irritability and agitation.

CBD Products

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The Unknowns of CBD Products

There are many important aspects about CBD that we just don't know, such as:

- What happens if you take CBD daily for sustained periods of time?
- What level of intake triggers the known risks associated with CBD?
- How do different methods of consumption affect intake (e.g., oral consumption, topical, smoking or vaping)?
- What is the effect of CBD on the developing brain (such as on children who take CBD)?
- What are the effects of CBD on the developing fetus or breastfed newborn?
- How does CBD interact with herbs and other plant materials?
- Does CBD cause male reproductive toxicity in humans, as has been reported in studies of animals?

You may have noticed that cannabidiol (CBD) seems to be available almost everywhere, and marketed as a variety of products including drugs, food, dietary supplements, cosmetics, and animal health products. Other than Epidiolex, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not approved any other CBD products, and there is very limited available information about CBD, including about its effects on the body.

There are many unanswered questions about the science, safety, and quality of products containing CBD.

Despite the 2018 Farm Bill removing hemp – defined as cannabis and cannabis derivatives with very low concentrations (no more than 0.3% on a dry weight basis) of THC – from the definition of marijuana in the Controlled Substances Act, CBD products are still subject to the same laws and requirements as FDA-regulated products that contain any other substance.

Consumers should be aware of the potential risks associated with using CBD products.

Some of these can occur without your awareness, such as:

Liver Injury: During its review of the marketing application for Epidiolex – a purified form of CBD that the FDA approved in 2018 for use in the treatment of two rare and severe seizure disorders – the FDA identified certain safety risks, including the potential for liver injury.

Drug Interactions: Information from studies of the FDA-approved CBD drug Epidiolex show that there is a risk of CBD impacting other medicines you take – or that other medicines you take could impact the dose of CBD that can safely be used.

Male Reproductive Toxicity: Studies in laboratory animals showed male reproductive toxicity, including in the male offspring of CBD-treated pregnant females. The changes seen include decrease in testicular size, inhibition of sperm growth and development, and decreased circulating testosterone, among others. Because these findings were only seen in animals, it is not yet clear what these findings mean for human patients and the impact it could have on men (or the male children of pregnant women) who take CBD. For instance, these findings raise the concern that CBD could negatively affect a man's fertility. Further testing and evaluation are needed to better understand this potential risk.

In addition, CBD can be the cause of side effects that you might notice. These side effects should improve when CBD is stopped or when the amount used is reduced. This could include changes in alertness, most commonly experienced as somnolence (sleepiness), but this could also include insomnia; gastrointestinal distress, most commonly experienced as diarrhea and/or decreased appetite but could also include abdominal pain or upset stomach; and changes in mood, most commonly experienced as irritability and agitation.

The FDA is actively working to learn more about the safety of CBD and CBD products, including the risks identified above and other topics, such as:

Cumulative Exposure: The cumulative exposure to CBD if people access it across a broad range of consumer products. For example, what happens if you eat food with CBD in it, use CBD-infused skin cream and take other CBD-based products on the same day? How much CBD is absorbed from your skin cream? What if you use these products daily for a week or a month?

Special Populations: The effects of CBD on other special populations (e.g., the elderly, children, adolescents, pregnant and lactating women).

CBD and Animals: The safety of CBD use in pets and other animals, including considerations of species, breed, or class and the safety of the resulting human food products (e.g., meat, milk, or eggs) from food-producing species.

Can CBD Products Lead to a Positive Drug Test?

Long story short, yes, CBD may yield a positive result on a drug test. There are certain actions you can take to determine whether the product you're buying contains the lowest amount of THC possible, but there's no guarantee that the labeling is accurate due to the lack of regulation of CBD products.