

Treating Heart Disease With CBD Oil: the risks, the benefits, the truth.

<https://cannabismd.com>

Heart Disease: it can happen to anyone, at any time, for a multitude of reasons. Heart disease is a broad word for a number of problematic conditions involving the heart. Heart diseases involve narrowed, blocked, or corroded blood vessels, the heart's valves, and even the heart's muscle itself. Some people are born with a heart disease (known as Congenital Heart Defect), and sometimes it comes later in life. Heart diseases can be a result of environment, lifestyle, or genetics. Some people with heart disease live active, productive lives without more than just carefully monitoring their condition and maintaining healthy habits. Others endure numerous surgeries, complications, and have to take medication indefinitely to keep the symptoms of their heart condition at bay.

Congenital Heart Defect

Congenital Heart Disease is often confused with Cardiovascular Disease. They both affect the heart and blood vessels, but the biggest difference is that congenital heart disease—also referred to as congenital heart defect—is present at birth, cardiovascular disease is not.

To put it simply, congenital heart defect means that there were problems with the development of the heart's structure in the womb. It is the most common type of birth defect, and affects 8 out of every 1,000 newborns.

There are many types of congenital heart diseases. Simple defects come with little to no complications, and are either so minor they are left untreated, or can be easily fixed. More complex defects with severe life-threatening symptoms

need to be treated soon after birth, and usually need to be monitored for the rest of the child's life. Fortunately, with the advancement of modern technology and medicine, most children who experience complex heart defects will not only survive to adulthood, but do so with minor difficulty.

Doctors aren't completely sure why some babies are born with congenital heart disease, but it can be linked to:

- An abnormality in the number of chromosomes in the infant
- Genetics
- Some illnesses during first trimester of pregnancy
- Certain medications during pregnancy
- Drug or alcohol abuse during pregnancy
- Women who suffer from seizure and take anti seizure medications during pregnancy are also at risk

Doctors believe congenital heart defects are typically caused by multiple factors, making it difficult to tell for sure if or how it's possible to prevent them.

Cardiovascular Disease

Just like congenital heart disease, Cardiovascular Disease directly affects the heart and circulatory system. Cardiovascular disease, however, is a term for a class of heart conditions that are not present at birth, and can in many cases be preventable. Atherosclerosis, the most common cause of cardiovascular disease, is onset by correctable problems such as poor diet, lack of exercise, tobacco or excess alcohol use, and sedentary lifestyle. It is a condition where plaque builds up in the arterial walls, narrowing the pathway in which blood flows in and out. This of course makes it difficult for the heart to perform properly. If left untreated, an artery will likely get blocked completely, which could lead to stroke or heart attack.

There are many different types of cardiovascular disease:

- Heart Failure – this does not necessarily mean the heart has stopped, rather it has stopped working the way it is supposed to. The heart is still working, but it is having difficulty pumping blood, oxygen, and circulating essential nutrients throughout the body.
- Arrhythmia – a word for when your heart doesn't beat properly. This can mean your heart beats too fast, too slow, or irregularly. This makes it, once again, difficult for your heart to perform the way it should.
- Heart Valve Disease – All heart valve problems fall under the umbrella of cardiovascular disease. As per its name, heart valve disease covers pretty much any condition associated with the heart's valves. It can come with virtually no warning or symptoms. Alternatively, it can be associated with chest pains, lightheadedness or loss of consciousness, fatigue, weakness, shortness of breath, and more.

Marijuana: a cure-all?

Treating any kind of medical condition can be tricky, but heart diseases can be particularly delicate. Treatment largely depends on the type of heart condition a person is diagnosed with. More and more heart patients are interested in exploring cannabis as an alternative to prescription medications, as many pharmaceuticals can come with an array of undesirable side effects or even allergies. Many people are aware that cannabis has been used to help treat heart conditions like hypertension and heart failure, but are unsure about how it works. As cannabis is becoming more widely accepted in recent years, information about cannabis extracts like CBD oil and their impressive ability to cure have been a topic in the forefront of many reports.

You may have already heard about Rick Simpson, a Canadian man who treated basal cell carcinoma (a form of skin cancer) with a homemade cannabis tincture. What you may not know is that years prior to that, Simpson had treated a completely different condition with cannabis:

“Simpson was working in the hospital boiler room covering the asbestos on the hospital's pipes with potent aerosol glue. The boiler room was poorly ventilated and the toxic fumes caused a temporary nervous system shock, causing Simpson to collapse off his ladder and hit his head. He was knocked unconscious and when he awoke, he managed to contact his colleagues to take him to the emergency room. He continued to suffer from dizzy spells and a ringing in his ears for years after the accident, but his prescribed medication had little effect, even making his symptoms worse.” (Read one account of the incredible full story [here](#))

Desperate for a substitute for the pharmaceuticals, Rick dove into alternative medicine and came upon information regarding the positive effects of cannabis. He consulted his doctor in hopes of finding resources to help substantiate his findings, but his doctor was skeptical and refused to consider it as a course of treatment. Simpson then decided to resource his own cannabis and began making his own tincture, which he took orally. He saw a significant improvement in the symptoms he developed from his accident.

Efforts to study and use cannabis as a medicine is claimed to have been around as early as 2900BC, but only in recent centuries has it been taken seriously in western medicine. In *Medical Marijuana Law*, Richard Glen Boire, JD and Kevin Feeney, JD, say it was in the mid-nineteenth century that marijuana was added to U.S. Pharmacopeia:

“By 1850, marijuana had made its way into the United States Pharmacopeia [an official public standards-setting authority for all prescription and over-the counter medicines], which listed marijuana as treatment for numerous afflictions, including: neuralgia, tetanus, typhus, cholera, rabies, dysentery, alcoholism, opiate addiction, anthrax, leprosy, incontinence, gout, convulsive disorders, tonsillitis, insanity, excessive menstrual bleeding, and uterine bleeding, among others. Patented marijuana tinctures were sold...”

We are learning that early claims of the effectiveness of the plant may not have been too far off. A popular English health book in 1621 by scholar Robert Burton suggests using cannabis to treat depression (The Anatomy of Melancholy). Recent studies have confirmed what he claimed nearly 400 years ago.

How is marijuana medicine?

Many people are surprised to learn that cannabis not only has numerous benefits, but there are also ways to use it without getting high. We have learned that cannabis carries over 85 chemical compounds called cannabinoids, and not all of them have the ability to intoxicate. These compounds are unique to the plant and are so complex that so far, we've only been able to study a handful of them in depth.

Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) was, until recently, the most sought after cannabinoid in the plant. This is because THC is psychoactive: the compound responsible for getting you high. What could be better than that? Enter cannabidiol, or, CBD. When it comes to treating medical conditions, THC can certainly hold its own. Reports of using this compound to treat anything from cold sores to multiple sclerosis can be found in almost every corner, and research is growing rapidly.

CBD, on the other hand, also has tons of benefits and very few known side effects, including psychoactive. Yes, it's true: CBD will not get you high, making it totally possible to use without getting intoxicated or failing a drug test. Even better? CBD can be administered a variety of different ways:

- Topical: Just like Simpson did for skin cancer, CBD oil can be applied to the skin by itself or in the form of a lotion, salve, or tincture. Many people opt for this when treating a localized area, like rheumatoid arthritis or a skin condition. Because the skin is naturally resistant to cannabinoids, the CBD cannot pass through and

enter the bloodstream. This is especially ideal for those who do not wish to have cannabinoids circulating their system.

- Transdermal: patches that are specifically formulated to help the CBD pass through the skin and into the bloodstream. Ideal for those who do not wish to smoke or ingest cannabinoids, but still need the medicine in their system.
- Suppository: Rick Simpson and many others have claimed that a CBD oil suppository is an effective treatment when locally treating things like hemorrhoids.
- Oral: Possibly the most common form of administering CBD oil, it is possible to get it in many edible forms: tablets, tinctures, pills, candies, etc.

What is CBD oil?

Many people are concerned about using CBD as medicine for a multitude of reasons. There are a lot of factors to consider, and unfortunately, a lot of misinformation and misunderstanding about cannabinoids in general to wade through.

Cannabidiol (CBD) is found naturally in the cannabis plant. Some plant strains produce more CBD than others. This is important to know especially if you plan on making your own CBD oil. CBD oil is made by soaking the whole plant in ethanol, something like a grain alcohol (yes, the kind you drink!). The alcohol extracts the cannabinoids from the plant matter, leaving you with CBD infused alcohol. This is then carefully heated to evaporate the alcohol, leaving you with a potent CBD oil concentrate. This is then infused into creams, edibles, patches, or a number of other products now available on the market. Again, CBD doesn't get you high so it is considered to be perfectly safe.

What are the benefits of CBD oil?

There are dozens of uses for CBD oil, and we are still learning about its benefits in medicine. Some known benefits of CBD oil include:

- Pain reliever
- Anti-inflammatory
- Reduces nausea and vomiting
- Relieves anxiety
- Tranquilizing/psychosis management
- Reduces seizures and convulsions
- Reduces contractions of small intestine
- Suppresses muscle spasms
- Can aid with sleep
- Reduces efficacy of the immune system
- Reduces blood sugar levels
- Helps prevent nervous system degeneration
- Kills or slows bacterial growth
- Inhibits cell growth in tumors/cancer
- Promotes bone growth

Most importantly, if you are looking into using CBD oil to treat long term effects of heart diseases, CBD has been found to also

- Reduce risk of artery blockage

An informative, thorough 2013 review found that isolated CBD acted as a potent vasorelaxant. Vasorelaxation is the reduction in tension of the walls of the blood vessels, or a decrease of vascular pressure. The review also listed findings regarding CBD and cardiovascular health. It states that:

- “Cannabidiol (CBD) has beneficial effects in disorders as wide-ranging as diabetes, Huntington’s disease, cancer and colitis. Accumulating evidence now also suggests that CBD is beneficial in the cardiovascular system.
- CBD has direct actions on isolated arteries, causing both acute and time-dependent vasorelaxation.
- A common theme throughout these studies is the anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant effect of CBD.
- CBD influences the survival and death of white blood cells, white blood cell migration and platelet aggregation.”

It concludes, “these preclinical data appear to support a positive role for CBD treatment in the heart, and in peripheral and cerebral vasculature. However, further work is required to strengthen this hypothesis...”

What are the side effects of CBD?

Possibly the best part about CBDs are that they come with very few minor undesired side effects. Of course, as with any medicine, it’s important to exercise caution when dosing with CBD oil, or any cannabinoid. It is possible to overdose on CBD, however, it has not been linked to injury or fatality. The only known common side effects are:

- Hypotension
- Dry mouth
- Slowed psychomotor
- Lightheadedness
- Tiredness/lethargy

CBD oil and heart disease: the bottom line

CBD oil has not been studied long enough to have definitive data either way regarding the treatment of any specific medical condition. Some doctors believe it to be just as if not more effective than pharmaceuticals. Other doctors—like Rick Simpson’s—still have a hard time acknowledging the numerous reports and studies that claim CBD is proving itself as a powerful medicine for heart disease. It’s strongly recommended that you consult your physician to discuss

treatment and make sure your doctor is supportive and educated in proper dosing if you decide to treat heart disease with cannabis. More importantly, a heart disease is not always as easy as taking a pill or seeing a doctor. It can be a highly involved process that will also include many major lifestyle changes. Monitoring your heart and maintaining a healthy lifestyle is crucial to heart health and management. Educate yourself and decide if CBD oil is the right option for you.