



# PATIENT HANDBOOK

---

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Mass Alternative Care, Inc. is open to Massachusetts Patients and Caregivers holding a valid Patient or Caregiver ID Card issued by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

All patient and/or caregivers must present the following prior to entering Mass Alternative Care:

1. Valid Patient/Caregiver ID Card issued by the DPH; and
2. One of the following: valid driver's license, military ID, government ID, or passport.

|  |                            |                   |
|--|----------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Location:</b> 1247 East Main St, Chicopee, MA 01020 | <b>Hours of Operation:</b> |                   |
| <b>Telephone:</b> (413) 377-6240                       | Monday                     | 9:00 AM - 8:00 PM |
| <b>Website:</b> MassAltCare.com                        | Tuesday                    | 9:00 AM - 8:00 PM |
| <b>Twitter:</b> @massaltcare                           | Wednesday                  | 9:00 AM - 8:00 PM |
| <b>Facebook:</b> @massaltcare                          | Thursday                   | 9:00 AM - 8:00 PM |
| <b>Instagram:</b> @massalt.care                        | Friday                     | 9:00 AM - 8:00 PM |
| <b>Forms of Payment:</b> Cash Only                     | Saturday                   | 9:00 AM - 8:00 PM |
| *ATM On Site*  | Sunday                     | 10:00 AM - 5:00PM |
| *Credit cards not accepted*                            |                            |                   |

**Appointments: Available free of charge to new and current patients and caregivers.**  
**Mass Alternative Care offers Translation and Interpretation services as well as accommodations for the blind/visually impaired.**

### BECOMING A PATIENT

Mass Alternative Care can only serve patients and caregivers registered with the Department of Public Health (DPH). To become a registered patient with DPH you must:

1. Obtain a recommendation from a certifying physician that you have a medical condition that medical marijuana can help. (The certifying physician will give you a certification number to complete the patient registration process with the DPH).
2. Complete the Patient Registration Application located on the DPH website.  
<https://www.mass.gov/medical-use-of-marijuana-program> To complete this, you will need the following:
  - a. The certification number obtained from your certifying physician
  - b. Valid photo ID
  - c. Photograph of yourself
3. After the registration process has been completed with the DPH, a temporary program ID card (Patient Card) will be issued and may be used until your Patient Card will arrive at your mailing address.

During the registration process, you will also have the opportunity to designate a caregiver. The caregiver will need to complete a similar registration with DPH and will get a Caregiver Card from the DPH.

### VISITING MASS ALTERNATIVE CARE

Upon visiting Mass Alternative Care, you must have a valid Patient or Caregiver ID Card, AND an additional form of identification (driver's license, military ID, passport, or government ID) to enter the RMD. Mass Alternative Care will not admit any individual who does not have both forms of ID – no exceptions. In addition, please note that per DPH regulations, children are not permitted to accompany a patient or caregiver during their visit.

#### **Patient Experience:**

- You will complete a new patient form on your first visit with one of our Patient Services Agents (PSA)
- One of our Patient Services Agents will assist you and explain our products and help you select products and delivery devices
- At the time of purchase, marijuana and MIPs products will be entered into the DPH tracking system as required by Massachusetts law.
- In addition, we are committed to offering the following services:
  - Research materials related to medical marijuana
  - Private consultation from a Patient Services Agent
  - Financial assistance for patients with a verified financial hardship
  - Please note that the DPH does not allow prices on our website.

#### **After Your Visit:**

- All Marijuana products should be placed in the trunk of your vehicle, a locked container or glovebox or area that is not easily accessible to the driver or visible from the outside.
- You should only open your packages, and use products at home
- Consuming marijuana on Mass Alternative Care property, is illegal and will result in the patient being banned from further purchases.
- Keep all products in a secure location away and out of reach from children and pets. All Mass Alternative Care products are packaged in child proof and tamper-proof containers.
- Driving under the influence of marijuana is prohibited by M.G.L. c. 90, s. 24, and machinery should not be operated. Never operate a motor vehicle under the influence of marijuana or other illegal substances.

#### **MASS ALTERNATIVE CARE RETURN/EXCHANGE POLICY**

- There is no return or exchange for marijuana flower, oil, concentrates, or edibles.
- We will exchange products that are defective and/or are damaged within 30 days of purchase. We will offer this exchange for the same, or any other similar products. There will be no cash return.

Note: You may not distribute marijuana to any other individual, and must return unused, excess, or contaminated product(s) purchased at Mass Alternative Care, Inc. to our dispensary for proper disposal.

#### **COMPASSIONATE CARE PROGRAMS**

Mass Alternative Care provides reduced cost on all medical marijuana products to all our patients with the following verified qualifications: Financial hardships, Senior Citizens, and Veterans. The discounts stated below may be combined to a maximum total discount of 20%.

- Recipients of MassHealth are eligible for a 5% discount. Patient must submit a copy of their current Mass Health award letter, or member approval notice.
- Recipients of Supplemental Security Income are eligible for a 5% discount. Patient must submit a copy of their current award letter.
- Patients who do not have Supplemental Security Income and whose annual income is 300% of FPL or lower are eligible for a 5% discount. Patient must complete IRS form 4506-T and have the results sent to Mass Alternative Care.
- Senior citizens that are at least 62 years of age are eligible for a 5% discount. Patient must verify with a government issued ID.
- Veterans are eligible for a 5% discount. Patient must submit a valid military ID or DD Form 214.

The Compassionate Care program discounts may not be combined with any other in store or online specials including the first time patient or referral discount program.

### MASS ALTERNATIVE CARE PRODUCTS

Medical marijuana products are created from flower obtained from our cultivation site and other Massachusetts RMDs. Mass Alternative Care products include:

- **FLOWER**
- **CONCENTRATES:** Extracts produced by stripping down the essential oils of the plant using a specific solvent or a combination of heat and pressure.
- **MARIJUANA INFUSED PRODUCTS:** Marijuana-Infused Products (MIPs) are products infused with marijuana intended for use or consumption. These include:
  - Edibles: Infused edible food products.
  - Capsules: Infused marijuana capsules for a convenient and discrete method of intake.
  - Topicals: Infused lotions, patches, and other products that are absorbed through the skin.
  - Tinctures: A liquid herbal solution made by infusing marijuana into a solvent.

Typically, the cannabis plant is classified into four groups for medical use. Within each group, there are a variety of different strains from which to choose. The two major types of flower are **indica** and **sativa**; there are also mixed, or **hybrid** strains, which are a combination of the two major types, as well as strains that are specifically high in **CBD**.

- **SATIVA** – Typical traits include uplifting, stimulating, with more “cerebral” effects. Good for anxiety and PTSD relief, and daytime usage. Sativa plants are tall with narrow leaves, fluffier buds and have a longer flowering period than indica. Sativas are reported to have the following therapeutic effects:
  - Mood elevation
  - Increased energy
  - Increased sense of well-being & focus
  - Increased appetiteNote: For some patients, sativas may increase feelings of anxiety & paranoia.
- **INDICA** – Typical traits include sedative, analgesic, with more somatic relief. Indica targets conditions of the body rather than mind and is often recommended for nighttime usage. Indica plants are typically short and stocky with broad leaves, dense buds resulting in a shorter flowering period than sativa plants. Indicas are reported to have the following therapeutic effects:
  - Relaxation & stress relief
  - Relaxes muscles
  - Reduces spasms
  - Reduces pain & inflammation
  - Promotes sleep
  - Reduces anxiety
  - Relieves nausea
  - Stimulates appetite
  - Reduces intraocular pressure
  - Anti-convulsantNote: For some patients, indica may result in tiredness and unclear thinking.
- **HYBRID** – The result of breeding different types of cannabis plants in order to create a combination of effects. Hybrids can be 50/50, or lean towards being more indica or sativa dominant. This allows for strains to be customized in order to create desired therapeutic effects.
- **CBD VARIETIES** – While not a separate type of cannabis, some strains are bred to have a higher CBD and lower THC content – resulting in a less psychoactive effect, or even no psychoactive effect. In addition to

relieving pain and reducing anxiety, CBD strains are reported to be helpful in treating a number of other medical conditions. Reports have also shown that CBD strains have anti-inflammatory properties and are effective when treating seizure disorders, particularly in children.

All of our products are tested by an independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party laboratory. The laboratory testing includes an analysis of the cannabinoid profile and for any contaminants. These lab results are available to all patients as well as our policies and procedures regarding lab testing.

### USING MASS ALTERNATIVE CARE PRODUCTS

Medical marijuana works by entering the bloodstream and reaching the body's cells. Each product affects the body differently. The effect on your body and what you will feel is determined by the combination of:

- The method you use to take in the product;
- The strength or potency; and
- The dosage or amount you use

#### Methods:

- Inhaling is generally done by smoking a flower product. The effect of inhaled products can be felt rapidly.
- Ingesting is generally done by eating an edible product or by applying a topical to the skin. The effect of ingested products is often delayed two hours or more and effects may last longer than an inhaled product.

#### Strength/Potency: Cannabinoid Profile

- Marijuana products have one or more active ingredient(s), called a cannabinoid, which work together with other chemicals in the plant, called terpenes and flavonoids. This mix is called the cannabinoid profile. The combination and quantity of these ingredients results from the type of plant it is made from, and determines each product's potency or strength, and how it affects the body. Each product will have a label with the cannabinoid profile.
- THC and CBD are the two most well known cannabinoids. THC is a compound which has psychotropic (brain/head) effects. CBD is a compound which has limited psychotropic effects. Both THC and CBD have properties which can affect your body (i.e. lower pain, reduce nausea). The synergistic mix of the two, along with other cannabinoids and terpenes, result in the particular effect of each product, called the 'Entourage Effect.' More information on individual cannabinoids and terpenes is given at the end of this handbook.

#### Dosage: Flower vs. MIPs

- Flower is sold by weight measured in grams and ounces. Flower is typically sold broken down into the following amounts:

|           |           |           |          |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| 1/8 ounce | 1/4 ounce | 1/2 ounce | 1 ounce  |
| 3.5 Grams | 7 Grams   | 14 Grams  | 28 Grams |

- MIPs are measured and priced by the number of milligrams of the active ingredient (i.e. cannabinoid). The standard starting dose is 5mg.

#### Usage:

Each individual is affected differently by different products. As such, caution should be taken at all times, especially when trying a new product. Our Patient Services Agents are trained to answer individual questions related to usage. However, as a general rule, you should always use the smallest possible amount. You can always take more, but you can never go back and take less.

- **Flower:**
  - o Inhaled products enter the bloodstream rapidly and can be felt quickly.
  - o The effects can last from one to several hours, with the effect typically being the strongest in the first hour.

- o New users should try one inhalation and wait 10-15 minutes before taking another.
- **Marijuana Infused Products (MIPs):**
  - o You should always take MIPs on a full stomach and take the smallest possible dose as some MIPS are held in the stomach before entering the bloodstream.
  - o It takes longer to feel the effects from MIPS than from inhaled products. Wait at least two hours before having any more. A common mistake is to add more without waiting long enough to feel the impact of the initial dosage. Be patient - it may take up to 2 hours to feel an effect from a single dose.
  - o Start low and go slow - this is the most important concept with MIPS. Start with a low dosage and do not increase it until you are certain of the impact of your dosage. We recommend you start with a 5mg dose or less.
  - o Some MIPS can be held in your mouth until they dissolved - dissolved products work more rapidly and tend to be shorter acting than other edible MIPS products.
  - o Remember, you can never go back and have less!

**Warning: A high tolerance for smoking does not necessarily equate to a high tolerance for medical marijuana edibles. Tolerance varies with a variety of factors including a patient's weight, body chemistry, and metabolism.**

**Labels:** All products are individually packaged and labeled prior to sale. Our Patient Services Agents will ensure you understand product labels and guide you through the benefits and use of each product.

How to read product labels:

- Product labels clearly show the amount of cannabinoids in milligrams (mg) of usable marijuana, we recommend you start with 5mg dose or less.
- THC vs CBD: Every label outlines the cannabinoid profile of the marijuana in the product. If you are looking for a high-CBD (non-psychoactive) product, take a look at the label, which clearly outlines the CBD content of the product.

**Tracking Results:** Keep track of strains and products you've tried by using your Patient Usage Log provided at the end of this handbook to learn from your experiences.

There can be unpleasant side effects (anxiety, paranoia, nausea) from inhaling or ingesting too much medical marijuana. Alcohol can also affect your reaction to it. Mass Alternative Care advises all patients to avoid using alcohol while using any product.

**Warning: Marijuana has not been analyzed or approved by the FDA. There is limited information on side effects of marijuana and there may be health risks associated with marijuana. As with any medicine, medical marijuana and MIPS should be kept away from children.**

## **PATIENT SAFETY**

Medical marijuana has tremendous benefits when used properly. However, as with other forms of substances, it can have side effects when not used correctly or when overused. You can research online and are encouraged to speak with one of our Patient Services Agents to learn about benefits and risks associated with medical marijuana. In addition, you should always discuss your medical marijuana usage with your healthcare providers.

Mass Alternative Care highly recommends patients keep a log and/or journal of product usage to monitor effectiveness of a product over time (Provided at the end of this Handbook). Our Patient Services Agents are available to assist you and answer questions based on your Patient Usage Log.

Overuse of marijuana, or using it incorrectly, can lead to overeating, sleeplessness, withdrawal symptoms and other issues. We strongly encourage you to use medical marijuana and our products carefully, and to speak with a member of our team, or a healthcare professional, if you think you may be misusing it, or are experiencing any side effects or issues.

Massachusetts law prohibits the use of marijuana and MIPs in public. As such, Mass Alternative Care patients should only open packaged products and consume products privately. Driving under the influence is dangerous and illegal under M.G.L. c.90 s.24, and patients should never drive or operate other machinery after consuming any marijuana or our products.

In addition, medical marijuana can be dangerous, especially when ingested children and pets. Marijuana has not been analyzed or approved by the FDA, thus there is limited information on the side effects and the risks associated with using marijuana. You should never share your product with anyone. All products should be stored safely and kept in the child proof packaging provided by Mass Alternative Care at the time of sale.

**A list of resources is available at the end of this Handbook and on-site at Mass Alternative Care.**

### **TOLERANCE, DEPENDENCE & WITHDRAWAL**

Physical dependence on marijuana is not substantiated by research. However, psychological dependence is possible with the overuse of any substance. A personal inventory should be taken if marijuana becomes a focal point in your life and consultation with your physician is recommended. Frequent or heavy use of medical marijuana can lead to increased tolerance of the drug, resulting in the need for higher doses or different strains. A brief break from using medical marijuana will bring your tolerance back down.

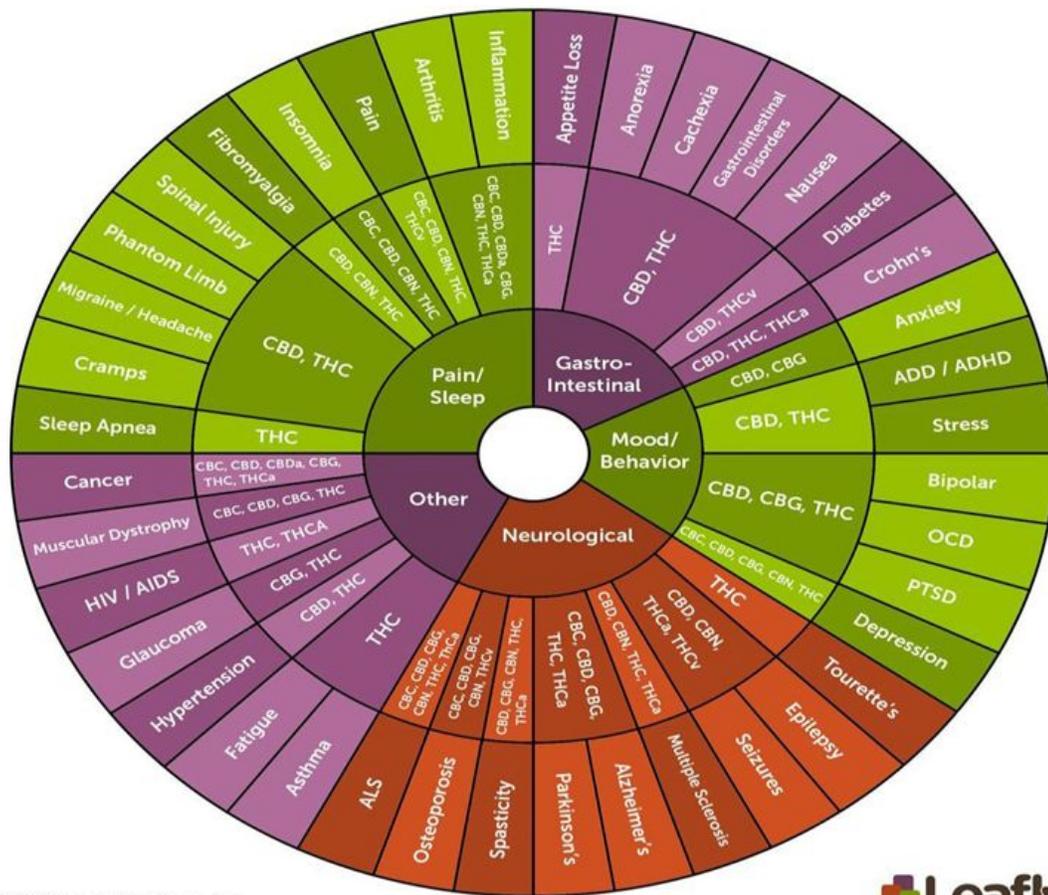
For more information about drug tolerance, as well as the possibility of dependence and withdrawal, please visit: <http://www.healthline.com/health/drug-dependence>

### **SUBSTANCE ABUSE SIGNS & SYMPTOMS**

Although different substances have different physical effects, the symptoms of addiction are similar. If you recognize the following signs and symptoms of substance abuse, consider talking to someone.

- You're neglecting your responsibilities at school, work, or home (e.g. flunking classes, skipping work, neglecting your children) because of your substance use.
- You're using substances under dangerous conditions or taking risks while high, such as driving while under the influence.
- Your substance use is getting you into legal trouble, such as arrests for disorderly conduct or stealing to support your substance use.
- Your substance use is causing problems in your relationships, such as fights with your partner or family members, an unhappy boss, or the loss of old friends.
- You've built up a tolerance. You need to use more of the substance to experience the same effects.
- You take substances to avoid or relieve withdrawal symptoms. If you go too long without the substance, you experience symptoms such as nausea, restlessness, insomnia, depression, sweating, shaking, and anxiety.
- You've lost control over your substance use. You often use more than you planned, even though you told yourself you wouldn't. You may want to stop using, but you feel powerless.
- You've abandoned activities you used to enjoy, such as hobbies, sports, and socializing, because of your substance use.
- You continue to use the substance, despite knowing it's hurting you. It's causing major problems in your life—blackouts, infections, mood swings, depression, paranoia— but you use anyway.

### **CANNABINOIDS**

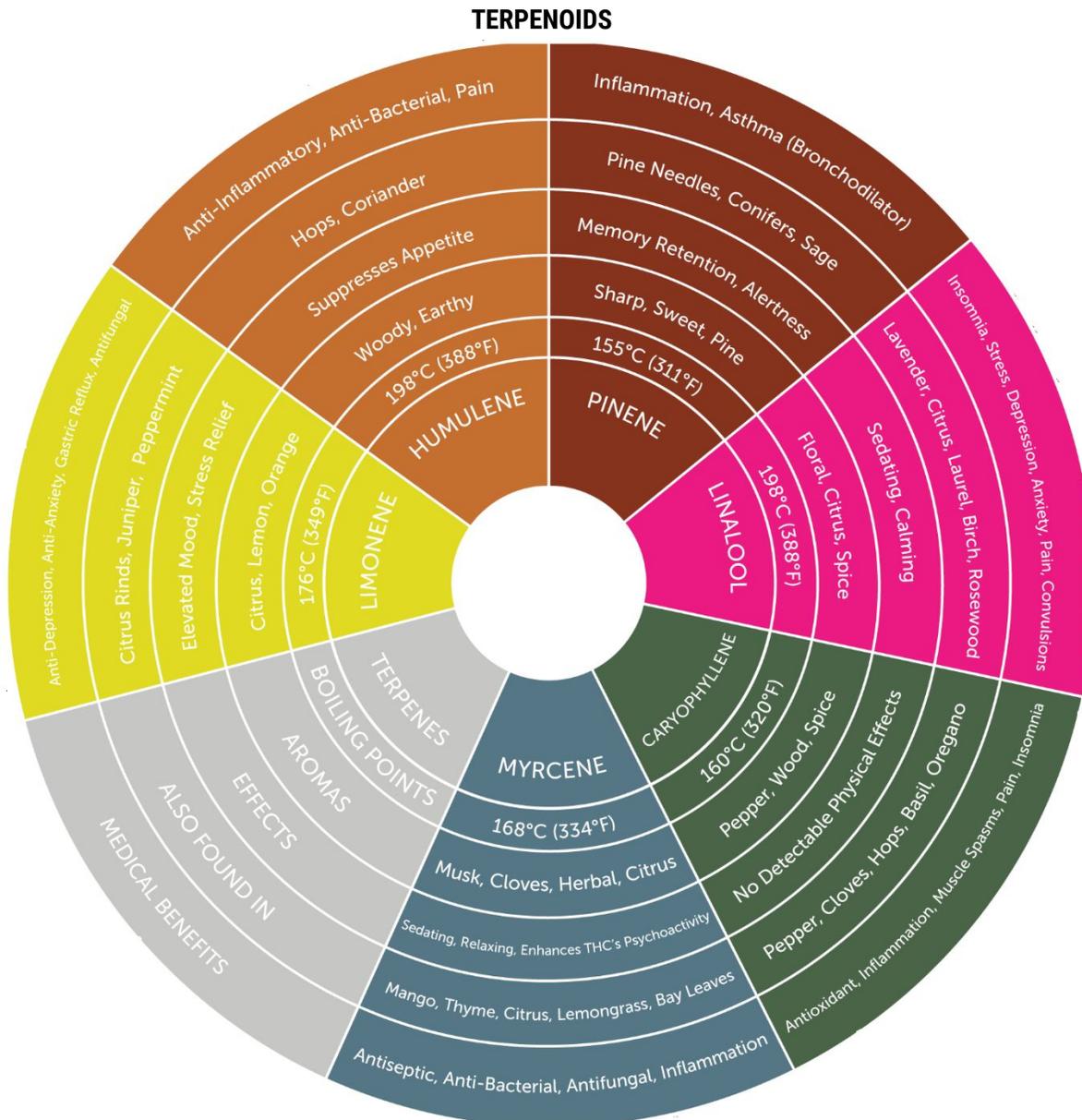


©2014 Leafly Holdings, Inc.



- $\Delta 9$ THC (Tetrahydrocannabinol): Delta 9 THC the most abundant cannabinoid present in marijuana, THC is responsible for cannabis' most well-known psychoactive effects. The compound is a mild painkiller, and cellular research has shown that it has antioxidant activity and anticancer properties.
- $\Delta 8$ -THC (Delta-8-THC): is an analogue of delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol shown to be effective against vomiting and nausea, antianxiety, appetite-stimulating, painkilling, and helps with Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, and MS through preservation of neuronal integrity. Delta-8-THC exhibits a lower psychotropic potency than delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol, the primary form of THC found in cannabis.
- CBD (Cannabidiol): CBD has tremendous medical potential. This is particularly true when the correct ratio of CBD to THC is applied to treat a particular condition. CBD alone has medicinal properties without psychoactive effects, but research shows that it is more beneficial when used in combination with THC. Widely used for treatment of seizures and in children due to its non-psychoactive effect.
- THC (Tetrahydrocannabinolic Acid): THCA is the main constituent in raw cannabis. THCA converts to  $\Delta 9$ -THC when burned, or heated at a certain temperature. THCA, CBDA, CBGA, and other acidic cannabinoids contribute to cannabis' anti-inflammatory effects. This cannabinoid also acts as an antiproliferative and antispasmodic.
- CBDA (Cannabidiolic Acid): CBDA, similar to THCA, is the main constituent in cannabis with elevated CBD levels. CBDA selectively inhibits an enzyme that contributes to cannabis' anti-inflammatory effects.
- CBN (Cannabinol): Not produced by the cannabis plant; is the result of the oxidation, or breakdown, of THC. Not psychoactive on its own but is synergistically with THC. Potentially useful for treating burns as it reduces thermal sensitivity. burns as it reduces thermal sensitivity. The degradation of THC into CBN is often described as creating a sedative effect, or "couch lock."
- CBG (Cannabigerol): A non-psychoactive cannabinoid, CBG's antibacterial effects can alter the overall effects of cannabis. CBG is known to kill or slow bacterial growth, reduce inflammation, (particularly in its acidic CBGA form,) inhibit cell growth in tumor/cancer cells, and promote bone growth.

- CBC (Cannabichromene): CBC is known to relieve pain, reduce inflammation, inhibit cell growth in tumor/cancer cells, and promote bone growth. The effects of CBC appear to be mediated through non-cannabinoid receptor interactions.
- THCV (Tetrahydrocannabivarin): THCV is a minor cannabinoid found in only some strains of cannabis. THCV produces very different effects than THC. These effects include a reduction in panic attacks, suppression of appetite, and the promotion of bone growth
- CBDV (Cannabidivarin): Recent studies have shown CBDV has promise for its use in the management of epilepsy



Terpenoids or Terpenes are what you smell – thus, recognizing what they are will deepen your appreciation of cannabis as a patient. However, research is now beginning to show that terpenes also have strong medicinal benefits, especially in combination with cannabinoids. Secreted in the same glands that produce cannabinoids like THC and CBD, terpenes are the pungent oils that color cannabis varieties with distinctive flavors like citrus, berry, mint, and pine. Medical research on cannabis has so avidly focused on cannabinoids that we don't know much about these aromatic compounds yet. However, we know just enough to realize that terpenes are the next frontier in medical marijuana.

The development of terpenes in cannabis began for adaptive purposes: to repel predators and lure pollinators. Over 100 different terpenes have been identified in the cannabis plant, and every strain tends toward a unique terpene type and composition.

The most fascinating characteristic of terpenes is their ability to interact synergistically with other compounds in the plant, like cannabinoids. Most cannabis varieties have been bred to contain high levels of THC, and as a result, other cannabinoids like CBD, CBC, and CBN have fallen to just trace amounts. This has led growers to believe that terpenes help account for the unique effects induced by each cannabis strain.

Terpenes can add great depth to the horticultural art and connoisseurship of cannabis. Most importantly, terpenes may offer incredible medical value as they mediate our body's interaction with therapeutic cannabinoids. With unlimited combinations of synergistic effects, terpenes will open up new scientific and medical terrains for cannabis research.

## RESOURCES

About Medical Marijuana: Americans for Safe Access (ASA): ASA has compiled over 200 scientific and scholarly articles and summarized the potential therapeutic effects of medical marijuana in "Medical Cannabis Research: What the Science Says". This document can be a valuable tool in understanding the basic science behind medical marijuana use and its potential effectiveness and versatility in treating a number of conditions.

[http://www.safeaccessnow.org/medical\\_cannabis\\_research\\_what\\_does\\_the\\_evidence\\_say](http://www.safeaccessnow.org/medical_cannabis_research_what_does_the_evidence_say)

Information for Health Care Professionals: "Health Canada MMJ Info HC Professionals": Focuses on info to help medical professional appropriately recommend cannabis, but also useful for patients and caregivers. Overview of science & research, dosing, potential uses and possible adverse effects. [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/alt\\_formats/pdf/marihuana/med/infoprof-eng.pdf](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/alt_formats/pdf/marihuana/med/infoprof-eng.pdf)

American Academy of Cannabinoid Medicine: Organization of clinicians & researchers supporting the use of medical cannabis. Provides education to medical professional and the public on cannabinoids and the endocannabinoid system. <http://aacmsite.org>

Project CBD: Updates doctors and patients on developments in cannabinoid science and therapeutics. Supports further research and developments on cannabinoid medicines. <http://www.projectcbd.org>

National Organization for The Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML): Advocacy organization supporting the reform of marijuana laws. Includes a compilation of the recent research supporting medical marijuana use for a variety of identified conditions. <http://norml.org/library/recent-research-on-medical-marijuana>

Marijuana Policy Project: Advocacy organization supporting marijuana policy reform. Provides information supporting the use of medical marijuana, including research briefings, effective arguments, legislative overviews and federal policy. <https://www.mpp.org/issues/medical-marijuana/>

Helpguide.Org: A non-profit resource promoting mental and emotional health, provides the following information to help recognize substance abuse. <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/addiction/drug-abuse-andaddiction.htm>

### PATIENT USAGE LOG EXAMPLE:

|               |   |                            |          |                                |         |
|---------------|---|----------------------------|----------|--------------------------------|---------|
| 9/12/16       | Flower  | Super Silver Haze (Sativa) | Dry Pipe | Anxiety Relief, Pain Reduction | 2 puffs |
| <b>Notes:</b> | Really like this strain for the pain relief, immediate feeling of calm. Effects lasted for almost four hours. |                            |          |                                |         |

### PATIENT USAGE LOG

| Date Used     | Cannabis Product | Strain/ Type | Method of Use | Effects & Symptom Relief | Dosage |
|---------------|------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------------|--------|
|               |                  |              |               |                          |        |
| <b>Notes:</b> |                  |              |               |                          |        |

