



## CONSUMER EDUCATION

### Massachusetts General Laws

#### **Penalties for Possession or Possession with the Intent to Distribute**

- Consumers may not sell marijuana to any other individual
- Marijuana is a class D controlled substance under the Massachusetts Controlled Substances Act - **Mass. Gen. Laws. ch. 94C, § 31**

#### **Possession for Personal Use**

An adult may possess up to one ounce of marijuana; up to 5 grams of marijuana may be marijuana concentrate.

Within a primary residence, an adult may possess up to 10 ounces of marijuana and any marijuana produced by marijuana plants cultivated on the premises.

An adult who possesses more than one ounce of marijuana or marijuana products must secure the products with a lock.

- **Mass. Gen. Laws. ch. 94G, § 7**
- **Mass. Gen. Laws. ch. 94G § 13(b)**

Possession of more than one ounce of marijuana is punishable by a fine of \$500 and/or imprisonment of up to 6 months. However, first offenders of the controlled substances act will be placed on probation and all official records relating to the conviction will be sealed upon successful completion of probation. Subsequent offenses may result in a fine of \$2000 and/or imprisonment of up to 2 years. Individuals previously convicted of felonies under the controlled substances act who are arrested with over an ounce of marijuana may be subject to a fine of \$2000 and/or up to 2 years of imprisonment.

- **Mass. Gen. Laws. ch. 94C, § 34**

#### **Possession with Intent to Distribute**

For first offenders, possessing less than 50 pounds of marijuana with the intent to manufacture, distribute, dispense or cultivate is punishable by a fine of \$500-\$5,000 and/or imprisonment of up to 2 years. Subsequent offenses are punishable by a fine of \$1,000-\$10,000 and/or imprisonment of 1-2.5 years.

- **Mass. Gen. Laws, ch. 94C, § 32C**

Possessing 50 – less than 100 pounds of marijuana with intent to distribute is a felony punishable by a fine of \$500-\$10000 and imprisonment for 2.5-15 years. There is a mandatory minimum sentence of 1 year for this offense.

Possessing 100 – less than 2000 pounds of marijuana with intent to distribute is a felony punishable by a fine of \$2,500-\$25,000 and imprisonment for 2-15 years. There is a mandatory minimum term of 2 years imprisonment.

Possessing 2,000 – less than 10,000 pounds of marijuana with intent to distribute is a felony punishable by a fine of \$5,000-\$50,000 and imprisonment for 3 ½ – 15 years. There is a mandatory minimum term of 3 ½ years imprisonment.

Possessing 10,000 pounds or more of marijuana with intent to distribute is a felony punishable by a fine of \$20,000-\$200,000 and imprisonment of 8-15 years. There is a mandatory minimum term of 8 years of imprisonment for this offense.

- **Mass. Gen. Laws. ch. 94C, § 32E**

If any of the above offenses are committed within 300 feet of a school and if the violation occurs between 5:00 a.m. and midnight, whether or not in session, or within 100 feet of a public park that offense is punishable by a fine of \$1,000-\$10,000 and imprisonment for 2 – 15 years. This offense has a mandatory minimum term of 2 years of imprisonment.

- **Mass. Gen. Laws. ch. 94C, § 32J**

Causing or inducing someone under 18 to commit any of the above offenses is punishable by a fine of \$1,000-\$100,000 and imprisonment for 5 – 15 years. This offense has a mandatory minimum term of 5 years of imprisonment.

- **Mass. Gen. Laws. ch. 94C, § 32K**

## **Pet & Child Safety**

Marijuana has not been analyzed or approved by the FDA. There is limited information on its side effects available and there may be health risks associated with using marijuana.

Store marijuana products safely to keep children and pets safe from accidentally eating marijuana. According to news reports, veterinary hospitals in Colorado are seeing an increase in the number of visits from pets that have eaten marijuana.

Marijuana products can be mistaken for regular food or candy.

Increasing numbers of children under 9 years old have been to an emergency room or hospitalized after accidentally consuming marijuana. Help prevent these accidents among children by storing your marijuana products safely and securely.

Be sure to keep all marijuana products in child-resistant packaging, clearly labeled and locked up.

- Keep marijuana in the child-resistant packaging from the store.
- Make sure your children can't see or reach the locked cabinet or box.
- How you store marijuana should change as children get older. Safe storage around young children may not stop older children or teens.

### **Responsible Use**

As with most substances, use of marijuana comes with some risk. Learn more about how to be responsible when using marijuana. Tips for responsible use may depend on how or where you use and what you plan on doing after. Be safe. Be responsible with marijuana.

### **Recognizing products that contain marijuana**

The CCC requires that all retail marijuana products use the symbol pictured here on packaging.



Teach your kids not to eat or drink anything with this symbol on the package.

Also, adults who can't read the ingredient label can use this symbol as a warning that the product contains marijuana.

### **Accidental marijuana use**

- Eating or drinking marijuana can make children very sick. They may have problems walking or sitting up, have a hard time breathing or start to feel sleepy.
- If you're worried about your child, call the poison control hotline at 1-800-222-1222 as soon as possible. Calling is free and you'll be helped quickly.
- If a reaction seems bad, call 911 or go to an emergency room right away.
- Call a veterinarian if you suspect your pet has ingested marijuana products.

## **Marijuana: Safety while Impaired**

Driving any machinery while under the influence of marijuana is prohibited by M.G.L. Chapter 90, Section 24. Being high or buzzed while doing some activities can be risky. For occasional users, smoking, eating or drinking even one serving (10 mg) of marijuana is likely to cause impairment. This affects your ability to drive, bike or perform other safety-sensitive activities.

### **Impairment**

- The effects of marijuana peak just minutes after inhaling marijuana smoke or vapor.

- Wait at least six hours after smoking less than 35 mg THC before driving or biking. If you have smoked more than 35 mg, wait longer.
- The effects can peak up to four hours after eating or drinking marijuana and can last up to 10 hours.
- Wait at least eight hours after eating or drinking less than 18 mg of THC before driving, biking or performing other safety-sensitive activities. If you have consumed more than 18 mg of THC, wait longer.

## Cannabis Types

The two main types of cannabis, sativa and indica, are used for a number of medicinal and recreational purposes.

**Sativa** strains are known for their “head high,” an invigorating, energizing effect that can help reduce anxiety or stress and increase creativity and focus.

- **Commonly associated effects of use:** Sativa often produces a “mind high,” or an energizing, anxiety-reducing effect. If you use sativa-dominant strains, you may feel productive and creative, not relaxed and lethargic.

**Indica** strains are typically associated with full-body effects, such as increasing deep relaxation and reducing insomnia.

- **Commonly associated effects of use:** Indica is sought after for its intensely relaxing effects. It may also reduce nausea and pain and increase appetite.

**Hybrid** strains are a combination of indica and sativa strains.

- **Commonly associated effects of use:** Farmers and producers select hybrids for their unique impacts. They can range from reducing anxiety and stress to easing symptoms of chemotherapy or radiation.

Tracking of the strains used and their effects can be accomplished with the Releaf App

- (<https://releafapp.com/> )

### Tolerance

Tolerance happens when a person no longer responds to a drug in the way they did at first. So it takes a higher dose of the drug to achieve the same effect as when the person first used it. This is why people with substance use disorders use more and more of a drug to get the “high” they seek.

### Dependence

Dependence means that when a person stops using a drug, their body goes through “withdrawal”: a group of physical and mental symptoms that can range from mild (if the drug is caffeine) to life-threatening (such as alcohol or opioids, including heroin and prescription pain relievers). Many people who take a prescription medicine every day over a long period of time can become dependent; when they go off the drug, they need to do it gradually, to avoid withdrawal discomfort. But people who are dependent on a drug or medicine aren’t necessarily addicted.

### Addiction

Unlike tolerance and dependence, addiction is a disease; but like tolerance and dependence, addiction can result from taking drugs or alcohol repeatedly. If a person keeps using a drug and can't stop, despite negative consequences from using the drug, they have an addiction (also called a severe substance use disorder). But again, a person can be dependent on a drug, or have a high tolerance to it, without being addicted to it.

### **Withdrawal**

**The main behavioral symptoms of marijuana withdrawal include:**

- Being irritable
- Feeling anxious or worried
- Feeling depressed
- Being restless

**The physical symptoms can include:**

- Stomach pain
- Sweatiness
- Shakiness
- Fever
- Chills
- Headache
- Having trouble sleeping at night and feeling tired during the day
- Having low appetite or losing weight

### **Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS)**

250 Washington Street

Boston, MA 02108

617-624-5111

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/bureau-of-substance-addiction-services>

The **Massachusetts Substance Use Hotline:** 800-327-5050

## **Ways of Consuming Cannabis**

### **SMOKING CANNABIS**

**How it works:** Pack a small amount of dried (cured) cannabis flower into a pipe, water pipe (bong), or rolling paper (to create a "joint").

Then hold a flame to the cannabis flower until it combusts as you inhale the smoke from the mouthpiece or other end of the joint.

### **Pros**

- Delivers instant relief
- Fairly easy to regulate dosage
- Inexpensive
- Minimally processed
- Multiple options

### **Cons**

- Smoke may be harmful to lungs. Studies have reached contradictory conclusions about whether and to what extent cannabis may cause lung damage, but combustion of any substance makes it harder to breathe.
- In many cases, not a good option for anyone with pulmonary damage (lung cancer, emphysema) or asthma
- Will make you smell like cannabis smoke

**Dosage:** Start small! Inhale lightly (i.e. “take a small hit.”). There is no need to hold the smoke in your lungs...exhale. Wait a few minutes. If you don’t feel the desired effect, or you want to feel a greater effect, take another hit.

### **VAPORIZING ``VAPING`` MARIJUANA**

**How it works:** Preheat the vaporizer to the recommended temperature. Insert a small amount of dried (cured) cannabis flower or extract into a vaporizer. Press the button and inhale. The cannabis will be heated to a temperature below its combustion point, but still hot enough to release the medicinal compounds.

Vaporizers are available in a wide array of shapes and sizes, from fancy home units to pocket-friendly pens.

### **Pros**

- Delivers instant relief
- Less harsh on lungs than smoking
- Doesn’t make you smell as much as smoking

### **Cons**

- Vaping units can be very expensive.
- Battery powered units must be recharged.
- Need time to warm up device.

**Dosage:** Start small! Inhale lightly (i.e. “take a small hit.”). There is no need to hold the smoke in your lungs...exhale. Wait a few minutes. If you don’t feel the desired effect, or you want to feel a greater effect, take another hit.

### **MARIJUANA EDIBLES**

**How it works:** Once upon a time, edibles were limited to homemade brownies that tasted pretty awful and contained a mystery dose of THC. Nowadays you can find medicated cookies, popcorn, crackers, nut mixes, lollipops, ice cream, gummy bears, chocolate bars, chews, and many other kinds of food. The culinary science has evolved enough that most products are yummy—you can hardly tell they contain cannabis.

### **Pros**

- Provides long-lasting relief.
- Good alternative for people averse to inhaling.
- You get to eat a delicious treat.
- Dosage can be very precise.

### **Cons**

- Can take half an hour to several hours to kick in.
- Dosage can be difficult if the manufacturer.
- Must be locked up to avoid children and pets.
- Causes a different “high” than smoking.

**Most Popular:** This is most popular method among Children & Elderly Patients.

**Dosage:** Dosages vary widely depending on your weight, metabolism, experience level, and other factors. Doctors we know have suggested starting with a small amount—2 mg or less—and waiting at least an hour before eating more.

### MARIJUANA TINCTURES OR SUB-LINGUAL SPRAYS

**How it works:** Extracted cannabinoids are mixed into an alcohol, glycerin solution or MCT Oil (Medium-Chain Triglyceride), which in many cases is coconut oil. These sublingual products usually come in a small bottle. Just squirt or spray it under your tongue and let it absorb through the thin tissue of the mouth.

#### Pros

- Doesn't hurt lungs like inhaling cannabis.
- Easy to control dosage for a very low dose.
- Mild taste.
- Preferred method for children.

#### Cons

- Can be expensive for people who require a high dosage of cannabinoids.
- Takes effect faster than edibles, but still not as fast as inhalation.

**Dosage:** Start with just a few drops and wait ten minutes. If you don't feel relief, try a few more drops. Eventually you'll figure out your ideal dosage—for most people, it's between half a dropper and a couple of droppers at a time.

### CANNABIS TRANSDERMAL PATCHES

**How it works:** Apply patch to a clean, dry and hairless skin surface. Many professionals recommend adhering the patch on the inner-wrist area, top of foot or ankle. This is the ideal method for any patients who rather not inhale the medicine. If you have explored multiple options without success, this might be the right path for depending on your choice of high you are trying to reach.

#### Pros

- No Smoking Required.
- Comes in different formulations.
- Mild dosages.

#### Cons

- Some individuals may develop an allergic reaction.
- Must be applied on a clean and dry skin surface.
- Not be applied where a great deal of body hair.

**Dosage:** Most transdermal patches come in 10mg dosed patches. They can be cut in half for smaller doses.

## MARIJUANA SUPPOSITORIES

**How it works:** You insert a small cone-shaped mass of cannabis extract into the rectum, where it absorbs through the colon. This method is somewhat controversial and rather less dignified than other ways to medicate, but some patients swear by it. Put on protective gloves, lie on your side, and insert the suppository about 1.5 inches. Squeeze your sphincter muscles and stay in place for at least a few minutes. When you're ready, get up, throw away the gloves, and thoroughly wash your hands. There are also companies who make pre-made ratios of medicine for rectal use – 1 mg non-injectable syringes.

### Pros

- Great alternative to edibles.
- Kicks in quickly and lasts long
- Most Efficient way to digest.

### Cons

- Difficult and embarrassing to administer.
- Must be refrigerated.
- Difficult to apply.

**Dosage:** Most suppositories come in two sizes: 2g for adults and 1g for children. They can be cut in half for smaller doses.

## MARIJUANA TOPICALS

**How it works:** Cannabis tinctures are a great way to medicate without any psychoactive effects. Salves, ointments, lotions, and sprays are great for arthritis, chapped skin, eczema, minor burns, muscle soreness, sunburns, swellings, joint pain, and tendonitis, to name just a few.

### Pros

- Topicals don't get you "high"
- Addresses skin issues
- Localized pain relief

### Cons

- Does not help cancer, PTSD, epilepsy, or glaucoma.
- Don't provide a euphoric feeling.
- Patients report some products simply don't work.

**Dosage:** You're unlikely to cause any real harm with topicals, but do try to find ones that are aimed at your specific ailment. Use salves and ointments as much as you want as often as you want, keeping in mind that they can get greasy. If you experience skin irritation, discontinue use. Consult your doctor about using transdermal patches.

## INGESTING FRESH CANNABIS

**How it works:** Raw cannabis has developed quite a following. Patients claim that the raw plant has medicinal properties that are lost when the plant is dried or heated. You ingest the raw leaves and buds straight from the plant, usually by mixing them into a juice or smoothie.

### Pros

- Raw cannabis is packed with THC-A, the acid form of THC, which is not psychoactive. Some patients and doctors believe THC-A has unique medicinal properties.

- Some patients whose chronic diseases never responded to other treatment (including dried cannabis) say that juicing raw marijuana has been their miracle cure.

#### **Cons**

- Requires large amounts of fresh cannabis.
- Has an unpleasant vegetal taste.
- Studies have not confirmed results.

**Dosage:** Dr. William Courtney, the leading advocate of juicing, recommends ingesting fifteen leaves and one or two big buds (2–4") daily.

### **MARIJUANA BEVERAGES**

**How it works:** Your local dispensary probably sells bottles of cannabis-infused teas, juices, smoothies, and sodas. You can also make your own cannabis tea by steeping a bud, piece of wax, or tincture in hot water. Adding a bag of your favorite tea can improve its flavor.

#### **Pros**

- Provides long-lasting relief.
- Alternative for people averse to inhaling their medicine.
- Give a specific feeling, such as stress relief or energy.

#### **Cons**

- Takes 30min-2hours to kick in.
- Dosage can be difficult.
- Causes a different "high" than smoking.

**Dosage:** Consult with your doctor before drinking marijuana beverages. Start with one small sip & wait an hour before deciding whether or not to drink more.

### **DABBING MARIJUANA**

**How it works:** A "dab" is a cannabis concentrate (hash oil, budder, shatter, wax, etc.) that you heat to a high temperature and inhale. The delivery devices vary, but they tend to be complicated and usually involve the use of a butane torch. Also, concentrates can contain as much as 90 percent THC, so you will get a very high dose of psychoactive compounds.

This method is NOT recommended for patients with a low THC tolerance or those new to cannabis medications!

#### **Pros**

- Useful for urgent medication of acute illnesses.
- Cost-efficient for patients who need High-THC.
- Provides instant relief.

#### **Cons**

- Concentrates are at higher risk of containing harmful chemicals.
- Solvents are used to extract the medicinal chemicals, may not be properly removed.
- May cause overdose, while never fatal, can be very unpleasant and uncomfortable.
- Devices are difficult to use; accidental burns are more likely.

**Dosage:** Consult with your doctor prior to trying dabbing—it's probably more than you need. If you do choose to try it, start with just one 'small' hit, but know that it will have extremely strong psychoactive effects.