

Medical Cannabis Consultants
Charles M Feicht D.O.\Family Healthcare Partners
145 Sunrise Center Drive
Zanesville, OH 43701
740-868-8428

Understanding Medical Cannabis

What you need to know

The cannabis plant is truly one of the miracles of God's creation. Medical cannabis has been in use for centuries. From the civilization of the ancient Greeks and Romans, to the Chinese kingdoms, to the Indian subcontinent and the Middle East, men and this plant have had an ongoing relationship. Earliest evidence of hemp seeds were discovered in pottery fragments over 30,000 years ago and the plant has been in existence from before the dinosaurs roamed the earth.

Western medicine first took note when a Scottish physician working for the East India Company followed his curiosity and scientific training to explore the medical effects of this unusual plant. Subsequently, cannabis extracts became part of Western medicine and were accepted as part of the US Pharmacopoeia until suppressed by the government, against the objections of the AMA, in 1937. As a result, the ability of science to investigate this incredible plant and its amazing properties has been near impossible for the past 80 years.

Even today, the marijuana plant and its many natural chemicals are largely off limits to scientific research owing to its classification as a schedule 1 substance

which categorizes it as having no medical use, likely to cause harm and illegal to use or possess.

However, the rigid legal edifice which has walled off this incredible plant is crumbling. Ongoing decriminalization and outright legalization is proceeding at an unprecedented pace. Today, we have the World Health Organization as well as the editorial board of Scientific American magazine calling for the cannabis plant to be re-classified to allow much needed research and treatment to proceed. Close to 70% of the US population support complete legalization and close to 90% favor medical use.

Patients in Ohio, and many other states, now have access to this amazing plant. The number of different chemicals or cannabinoids in a cannabis plant exceed 100, not counting a diverse pallet of plant compounds called terpenoids, the chemicals that give all plants their taste, fragrance and color. Many of these compounds are biologically active in ways we have yet to discover. Using derivatives of the whole plant provides for a biologic effect known as the “entourage effect” wherein varying natural compounds modulate and enhance biologic activity in ways that an isolated a pure pharmaceutical compound cannot.

Only since 1980 have scientists discovered a whole new system within the human body called the ECS or endocannabinoid system. Did you know that our bodies make their own cannabinoids, known as AG-2 and anandamide ? Or that the receptors for these endogenous cannabinoids (produced by our own body) are the most abundant receptors in the human body ? This discovery is monumental and will change the way we approach health and disease. Scientists are discovering that cannabis has powerful anti-anti-inflammatory properties, anti-proliferative

activity (inhibiting cancer cell replication), neuro-protective properties, and anti-bacterial and immune boosting activity. One of the cures for cancer may one day come from this plant. The analgesic properties of cannabis are enabling patients with chronic pain to reduce or eliminate their need for toxic opiates as well as anti-depressants and other drugs.

The most important thing for patients to understand is that the dosing of cannabis is unique to each individual and that there is a dosing sweet spot, where the desired clinical effect is obtained. In other words, more, is not better. Cannabis as a drug has a biphasic effect which means too little is ineffective and too much can actually produce the opposite of the desired effect.

The good news is that used properly, cannabis is an amazingly safe drug, especially as compared to almost any drug you could name. Aspirin or Tylenol can kill you if taken in excess. This is true of most drugs. Obviously the deaths from opioids is a national tragedy. No one has ever died of a cannabis overdose. Nevertheless, like any drug, due respect should be given. It is possible to have some adverse or even frightful side effects from excessive use of potent cannabis concentrates.

At Medical Cannabis Consultants, our goal is to educate our patients on how to safely use this modality for whatever qualifying conditions we are able to treat. Many physicians and researchers are exploring the many ways this amazing plant can help people get relief from various conditions and improve the quality of their lives. As a patient, you will be part of an adventure that advances the knowledge of this natural medicine.

