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Don’t Worry!

This book isn’t scary!

Ever try reading the fine print on one of those little brochures that come with your prescription bottles? Or Googling a medication to see how it works (only to give up after the third sentence starts with something like “sphenopalatine ganglioneuralgia”)?

Not to fear! This book is nothing like that!

Our goal at CannaMD is to provide practical patient education without making your head spin. (Speaking of which: “sphenopalatine ganglioneuralgia” is actually the technical term for an ice cream headache.) See, it’s working already!

We’re also super transparent:

We wrote this book hoping that it might encourage you to choose us as your medical marijuana doctor (seriously, our team is the best!). But you know what? Even if you don’t, we still want to make sure you have every piece of information you need to make important life decisions about your health.

After all, our goal is to help you get better!

So sit back, relax (and maybe grab some ice cream!), because we’ve organized everything you’ve ever wanted to know about medical marijuana. Let’s get started!

CannaMD.com
What is medical marijuana?
What is marijuana?

**Marijuana** (also known as cannabis) is a variety of the *Cannabis sativa* plant, which is part of the *Cannabaceae* family. While researchers are still trying to pinpoint an exact number, recent studies suggest marijuana contains over 100 unique chemical compounds called **cannabinoids**.

**Cannabinoids** are what make marijuana “work”. (More on that in a second...)

For now, all you need to know is that different cannabinoids do different things. For instance, **tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)** gives marijuana its psychoactive effect. **Cannabidiol (CBD)**, on the other hand, exerts its influence without any type of “high.”

Is marijuana really medicine?

Marijuana as medicine dates back to 2900 B.C., with the **Shen-nong Ben Cao Jing** (an ancient Chinese text) recording prescribed uses for rheumatic pain, malaria, and other common ailments. **Archaeological and historical accounts** also suggest cannabis was used, in combination with wine, to anesthetize patients during surgery.

While Western medicine didn’t pick up on the treatment until the early 19th century, researchers were quick to hop on board; by

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**Important Terms**

- **Cannabinoids**: Naturally occurring chemical compounds in hemp and marijuana plants; also known as plant cannabinoids or phytocannabinoids
- **CBD (cannabidiol)**: Often, but not always, the second-most abundant cannabinoid in marijuana
- **CBN (cannabinol)**: Cannabinoid known for its ability to promote sleep and relaxation
- **Hemp**: A non-psychoactive variety of the *Cannabis sativa* plant
- **Medical marijuana** (as defined by Florida Senate Bill 8A): All parts of any plant of the genus *Cannabis*, whether growing or not; the seeds thereof; the resin extracted from any part of the plant; and every compound, manufacture, salt, derivative, mixture, or preparation of the plant or its seeds or resin, including low-THC cannabis, which are dispensed from a medical marijuana treatment center for medical use by a qualified patient
- **THC (tetrahydrocannabinol)**: Cannabinoid responsible for marijuana’s mind-altering/psychoactive effects
the end of the century, there were over 100 publications on medical cannabis in Europe and the United States.

In 1976, the United States Controlled Substances Act classified cannabis as a Schedule I drug, abruptly halting most marijuana research and making access to critical resources for future studies difficult to achieve.

Fortunately, recent social, political, and legislative changes have turned the tide.

In 2017, the National Academy of Sciences released a report that reviewed 10,000 scientific abstracts and reached nearly 100 conclusions that found countless medical uses for marijuana and cannabis-derived products.

“Regular” versus medical marijuana

Wondering what’s the difference between “regular” marijuana and medical marijuana? (You’re not alone! We get that question a lot!)

The short answer? It depends on where you are and what you’re using it for.

Marijuana is marijuana. So the distinction really comes down to legal definitions (currently decided by each state) and how the plant is being used.

In a nutshell, “regular” or recreational marijuana is used without any medical justification.

As Harvard researchers explain:

“Although products used by recreational marijuana consumers and medical marijuana patients are derived from the same plant species, they are generally utilized for different purposes (i.e., to get high/alter one’s current state of being vs. symptom alleviation). Accordingly, recreational and medical users often seek different marijuana products with various constituent compositions based on the desired effect. Recreational marijuana users often seek products high in THC, the main psychoactive constituent of the cannabis plant, and while medical patients may also choose products with high THC levels they often seek products high in other potentially therapeutic cannabinoids.”

So what does Florida legislation say?

According to Senate Bill 8A, all parts of any Cannabis plant count; however, marijuana is only considered “medical” if it’s dispensed from a medical marijuana treatment center to a state-qualified patient.

What about hemp?

Everyone gets so confused about hemp!
True story: Even the United States government can’t keep it straight! (For more on that mix-up, check out our blog post: What is Hemp? And Why Does It Matter?.)

Hemp is another variety of the Cannabis sativa plant. However, while hemp shares a lot of common properties with marijuana, there’s one big difference:

Hemp can’t get you high.

According to the Ministry of Hemp:

“Your lungs will fail before your brain attains any high from smoking industrial hemp.”

Yep, it might not sound exciting, but hemp seeds are primarily used in food products (such as bread, milk, and cereal) and/or made into oil (including fuel, paint, and ink). Fiber from the plant’s stalk is often used in clothing and construction.

Fun fact: Hemp is more sustainable and 60 times faster to market than lumber.

Still confused? Think about marijuana and hemp as siblings. They share much of the same genetic makeup, but they’re two unique individuals.

Tell me more about cannabinoids

No problem! Here’s a little cannabinoid trivia for ya:

- Cannabinoids are sometimes called plant cannabinoids or phytocannabinoids
- THC is the only plant cannabinoid (that we know of) that has clear psychoactive effects on its own
- We’ve already reviewed THC and CBD; CBN (cannabinol) is another big player (known for making people relax)

Additional reading

Still curious? Keep learning with some of our favorite posts:

- The Ultimate Guide to Cannabinoids in Cannabis
- What Is Hemp? And Why Does It Matter?

Coming up next...

In the next chapter, we’ll review how marijuana works!

Ready to get started?

Find out if you qualify for medical marijuana treatment for FREE by completing a brief application or calling 1 (855) 420-9170!
How does medical marijuana work?
Chapter 2

Important Terms

**Cannabinoid receptors**: Receptors located throughout the body that interact with both endogenous (“natural/human”) cannabinoids and plant cannabinoids; the two known types of receptors are classified as CB1 and CB2.

**Endogenous cannabinoids**: The body’s “natural cannabinoids”; chemical compounds (lipid-based neurotransmitters) that interact with cannabinoid receptors to form the endocannabinoid system.

**Endocannabinoid system**: Biological system composed of endogenous cannabinoids and cannabinoid receptors; involved with regulating cognitive function, appetite, metabolism, stress, immune function, sleep, pain, thermoregulation, and more.

How does marijuana do stuff?

Cannabinoids make the world go round. (Well, not really. But they are super important! So if you haven’t already, make sure you brush up on Chapter One!)

All marijuana plants contain a variety of cannabinoids (such as THC, CBD, and CBN). These chemical compounds interact with our body through a unique biological system known as the endocannabinoid system to produce marijuana’s effects.

What is the endocannabinoid system?

Talk about being late to the party! The endocannabinoid system wasn’t even discovered until the early ‘90s and, if researchers are right: It might just be one of the most important systems in our whole body!

The endocannabinoid system is comprised of cannabinoid receptors and naturally produced cannabinoids, known as endogenous cannabinoids. These cannabinoids are extremely similar to the ones produced by the *Cannabis* plant (which is why it’s helpful to distinguish between them as phytocannabinoids and endogenous cannabinoids).

Whew! That’s a lot of “cannabinoids” in one little description!
How does the system work?

Since everything’s so new, scientists are still working out the details. However, the basics go like this:

Our body produces endogenous cannabinoids that interact with cannabinoid receptors called **CB1** and **CB2**. CB1 receptors seem to be primarily located in our brain, while CB2 receptors are mainly expressed in immune tissues and spread out all over. (Again, research is young. Scientists are constantly discovering new things in different places!)

These interactions, which make up the endocannabinoid system, are thought to underlie a number of really important functions, including:

- Appetite
- Sleep
- Pain
- Cognitive function
- Metabolism
- Stress
- Immune function

Give me some examples...

Okay, let's talk about pain.

When body tissue is damaged, your cells produce cannabinoids that regulate inflammation and pain sensation through interaction with cannabinoid receptors. These receptors are the same receptors targeted by cannabinoids in marijuana.

(So far, so good...)

Your body produces two types of cannabinoids in response to tissue damage: **anandamide** and **2-arachidonoyl-sn-glycerol (2-AG)**. (Don’t get thrown off by the names, they’re not that important! Remember our ice cream lesson!)

When you experience inflammation and nerve injury, anandamide springs into action and helps regulate pain signals by activating CB1 receptors. Its partner, 2-AG, plays a big role in decreasing pain during acute stress.

Since cannabinoid receptors are present throughout the central nervous system and in pain circuits from peripheral sensory nerve endings all the way up to the brain (so basically: everywhere!), cannabinoids are able to play a moderating role in different types of pain (including neuropathic pain and centralized pain like **fibromyalgia**).
As a recent *Cannabis and Cannabinoid Research* review explains:

“Understanding the function of endogenous [naturally produced] cannabinoids helps explain the efficacy of exogenous cannabinoids, such as those found in the cannabis plant, in treating pain.”

Summed up:

“The biologically hypothesized rationale for cannabinoid administration is whole-body exposure to exogenous cannabinoids to turn on pain inhibition.”

In other words?

If naturally produced cannabinoids can help decrease pain, introducing external cannabinoids (found in marijuana) should definitely help, too!

**What does science say?**

We’re not making this stuff up: Scientists are pumped about the endocannabinoid system!

Just take a look at the peer-reviewed journal, *Pharmacological Reviews*. Their article, *The Endocannabinoid System as an Emerging Target of Pharmacotherapy*, has already been cited over 1,600 times!

Other exciting publications, such as *The Therapeutic Aspects of the Endocannabinoid System for Cancer*, signal an important shift: Marijuana is no longer the bad guy. Instead, it might just be the hero!

**Additional reading**

Can't get enough cannabinoids? Check out some of our favorite resources:

- [Introduction to the Endocannabinoid System](#)
- [What Is the Endocannabinoid System and What Is Its Role?](#)
- [How Does Medical Marijuana Help Pain?](#)
- [Medical Marijuana Research Studies (By Condition)](#)

**Coming up next...**

In the next chapter, we'll review Florida's medical marijuana laws. (Definitely an important time to pay attention!)

**Ready to get started?**

Find out if you qualify for medical marijuana treatment for FREE by completing a [brief application](#) or calling 1 (855) 420-9170!
What are Florida’s marijuana laws?
Is recreational marijuana legal in FL?
No. (Not too much more to say here...)

Is medical marijuana legal in FL?
Yes! (Okay, now we have lots to talk about!)

Medical cannabis became legal in Florida in 2016, with the passing of the Florida Medical Marijuana Legalization Initiative, also known as Amendment 2. Rules for use and administration were outlined several months later by Senate Bill 8A.

What medical conditions qualify?
According to Florida state law, patients suffering from the following conditions may qualify for medical marijuana treatment:

- ALS
- Cancer
- Crohn’s disease
- Epilepsy
- Glaucoma
- HIV/AIDS
Multiple sclerosis

Parkinson’s disease

Post-traumatic stress disorder

(Tip: Click each condition to learn more about medical marijuana’s specific benefits!)

Senate Bill 8A also allows for treatment of other “diagnosable, debilitating conditions of like, kind, or class” (such as anxiety, depression, and migraines), as well as terminal conditions (diagnosed by a physician other than the physician issuing certification) and chronic nonmalignant pain (defined as pain caused by a qualifying medical condition that persists beyond the usual course of that condition).

For a full list of conditions that could qualify (outside of the main nine), please see our Qualifying Conditions: Details Page.

Wondering if your condition qualifies? Let CannaMD help! Complete a brief application (don’t worry: it’s free!) or give us a call at 1 (855) 420-9170!

Who qualifies?

According to Senate Bill 8A, a qualified patient is defined as:

“A resident of this state [Florida] who has been added to the medical marijuana use registry by a qualified physician to receive marijuana or a marijuana delivery device for a medical use and who has a qualified patient identification card.”

However, Senate Bill 8A expressly states that individuals who meet the definition of seasonal residents may qualify, as well:

“The term ‘seasonal resident’ means any person who temporarily resides in this state [Florida] for a period of at least 31 consecutive days in each calendar year, maintains a temporary residence in this state, returns to the state or jurisdiction of his or her residence at least one time during each calendar year, and is registered to vote or pays income tax in another state or jurisdiction.”

This means that Florida “snowbirds” may qualify!

Where CAN’T I use medical marijuana?

Medical marijuana use and/or administration is strictly prohibited in the following places:

• On any form of public transportation *
• In any public place *
• In the patient’s place of employment (unless permitted by his or her employer)
• In a state correctional institution
• On the grounds of a preschool, primary school, or secondary school
• On a school bus
• In a vehicle
• In an aircraft
• On a motorboat *

Exceptions: Low-THC cannabis use is permitted in categories followed by an asterisk (*). According to Senate Bill 8A, low-THC cannabis is defined as a plant of the genus Cannabis, the dried flowers of which contain .8 percent or less of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and more than 10 percent of cannabidiol weight for weight.

Additional reading
Have some technical questions? Check out our favorite articles and posts:

• Senate Bill 8A
• Senate Bill 182
• CannaMD Explains: Florida Amendment 2
• Florida Snowbirds Can Use Medical Marijuana
• Where Can’t I Use Medical Marijuana in Florida?
• Can I Use Medical Marijuana at Work in Florida?
• Tenant Rights: Medical Marijuana in Florida Apartments
• Can I Fly With Medical Marijuana?
• Can I Use Medical Marijuana in States Where It’s Not Legal?
• Florida Medical Marijuana Smoking Ban: Updates

Coming up next...
In the next chapter, we’ll review how to qualify for medical marijuana (that’s where we come in!). We’ll also explain how the whole process works from start to finish.

Ready to get started?
Find out if you qualify for medical marijuana treatment for FREE by completing a brief application or calling 1 (855) 420-9170!
How to qualify for medical marijuana
Where do I start?

Glad you asked!

In order to purchase medical marijuana, you have to qualify for treatment. And that’s where we come in!

Florida law requires all medical marijuana patients to have a state-issued medical card to make marijuana purchases; however, in order to get your medical marijuana card, you have to have a certified doctor provide a recommendation to the state (basically saying: yes, this patient qualifies!).

And that’s what CannaMD does!

All of our state-licensed, board-certified doctors have completed the required training to issue medical marijuana recommendations. Our job to is to help you receive treatment!

So the first step in the process? Schedule an appointment with an experienced CannaMD physician today!

Are your doctors “real” doctors?

Yes!

In accordance with state law, all CannaMD doctors hold an active, unrestricted license as either an allopathic physician or os-
teopathic physician and are in compliance with all state-mandated education requirements. At this time, educational requirements include completing an annual course and exam administered by either the Florida Medical Association or Florida Osteopathic Medical Association.

Also in line with Senate Bill 8A, CannaMD physicians are not employed by, and do not have any direct or indirect economic interest in, any medical marijuana treatment centers (also known as dispensaries) or marijuana testing laboratories.

**Where are you guys located?**

All over the state! To find a convenient location near you, just visit our interactive map page and enter your address. You can also give us a call at 1 (855) 420-9170!

**Tell me again what qualifies**

To receive treatment, you must be diagnosed with a qualifying condition (covered in Chapter Three). As a reminder, qualifying conditions include:

- ALS
- Cancer
- Crohn’s disease
- Epilepsy
- Glaucoma
- HIV/AIDS
- Multiple sclerosis
- Parkinson's disease
- Post-traumatic stress disorder

(Tip: Click each condition to learn more about medical marijuana’s specific benefits!)

Senate Bill 8A also allows for treatment of other “diagnosable, debilitating conditions of like, kind, or class” (such as anxiety, depression, and migraines), as well as terminal conditions (diagnosed by a physician other than the physician issuing certification) and chronic nonmalignant pain (defined as pain caused by a qualifying medical condition that persists beyond the usual course of that condition).

For a full list of conditions that could qualify (outside of the main nine), please see our Qualifying Conditions: Details Page.

Wondering if your condition qualifies? Complete a brief application (don’t worry: it’s free!) or give us call at 1 (855) 420-9170!
Are you sure I’m eligible?

Permanent and seasonal Florida residents who suffer from a qualifying condition may be eligible to receive medical marijuana treatment. (Note: CannaMD does not treat minors at this time.)

Seasonal (or “snowbird”) residents who reside in Florida for at least 31 consecutive days each calendar year and maintain a temporary residence in Florida may demonstrate eligibility by submitting a copy of two of the following documents that show proof of residential address:

- A deed, mortgage, monthly mortgage statement, mortgage payment booklet, or residential rental or lease agreement.
- One proof of residential address from the seasonal resident’s parent, step-parent, legal guardian or other person with whom the seasonal resident resides and a statement from the person with whom the seasonal resident resides stating that the seasonal resident does reside with him or her.
- A utility hookup or work order dated within 60 days before registration in the medical use registry.
- A utility bill, not more than two months old.
- Mail from a financial institution, including checking, savings, or investment account statements, not more than two months old.
- Mail from a federal, state, county, or municipal government agency, not more than two months old.
- Any other documentation that provides proof of residential address as determined by department rule.

What do I need?

You must be diagnosed with a qualifying condition before seeing a CannaMD doctor.

Florida state law requires that we see supporting documentation confirming your diagnosis for a qualifying condition. We accept physician-signed progress notes, written on either a prescription pad or practice letterhead, with your diagnosing doctor’s full name, date, and signature along with the condition for which you’ve been diagnosed. We do not accept lab results, x-rays, prescription bottles, patient portal screenshots, disability documentation, or pharmacy medication lists.

After scheduling you appointment, you’ll receive an email detailing how to submit this documentation prior to your visit. You can also call us with any questions: 1 (855) 420-9170!
We like to get all of the boring paperwork out of the way so you can spend your appointment time doing important stuff, like talking with your doctor!

Lastly, make sure to bring your Florida driver’s license or state-issued identification card!

**How much does it cost?**

**CannaMD’s initial appointment** is only $249. This all-inclusive fee covers you for 210 days (the longest period allowed by state law!) and includes all dosage adjustments and order renewals. (Dosage adjustments and order renewals are conveniently handled via email with your physician; normal response time is 24-48 hours.)

Florida law requires all patients to complete a face-to-face **renewal appointment** with their medical marijuana physician every 210 days. **CannaMD**’s renewal fee is only $195 and covers you for an additional 210 days.

**What happens after my appointment?**

After your first appointment, you will receive an email from the Florida Department of Health with instructions to create an online account. After completing this process and following all related instructions (including providing proof of residency and paying a state-required fee of $75), you will receive a temporary card via email in 7-21 days.

At this point, you may print your temporary card and purchase products from the Florida medical marijuana dispensary of your choice!

**Additional reading**

It always helps to be prepared! Check out some of our most frequently asked questions:

- [Can I Renew My Prescription for Medical Marijuana?](#)
- [What Is Your Refund Policy?](#)
- [What Is the Medical Marijuana Use Registry?](#)

**Coming up next...**

In the next chapter, we’ll review how to purchase medical marijuana!

**Ready to get started?**

Find out if you qualify for medical marijuana treatment for FREE by completing a [brief application](#) or calling [1 (855) 420-9170](#)!
How to purchase medical marijuana
Where do I buy medical marijuana?

After you receive your state-issued card, you’re ready to purchase and use medical marijuana!

The Florida Department of Health: Office of Medical Marijuana Use has authorized a select number of medical marijuana treatment centers (MMTCs), also known as dispensaries. These are the only businesses in Florida that are authorized to sell medical marijuana to qualified patients and caregivers.

Fortunately, there are a number of convenient Florida MMTC locations (and most will even deliver to your house!). To find the closest dispensary, consider using a free location service (such as WeedMaps) or visiting each MMTC’s website (as new locations are frequently added).

Authorized dispensaries are routinely updated on CannaMD’s MMTC/Dispensary Resource Page. At the time of publication, operational MMTCs include:

- AltMed
- Curaleaf
- Fluent
- GrowHealthy
• Harvest
• Liberty Health Sciences
• MedMen
• Rise
• Surterra Wellness
• Trulieve
• VidaCann

How do I know what to buy?

CannaMD doctors will provide you with dosing guidelines and approved methods of ingestion (basically: how much you can take and in what way). MMTC staff members will help advise on specific strains (or types of marijuana) and products.

How do I use medical marijuana?

According to Florida state law, patients may consume medical marijuana via a variety of methods including oils, sprays, creams, patches, suppositories, smoking, tinctures, and vaping. Edibles are also allowed, but no rules have been developed for their use (so technically, you can’t use them... at least not yet!).

Can I smoke medical marijuana?

Yes! However, you must have a qualifying condition that is supported by research that specifically addresses the benefits of smoking for that particular condition. For this reason, CannaMD physicians only recommend smokable routes for certain conditions. (This list is constantly evolving as new research is published.) For details, please give us a call at 1 (855) 420-9170!

Additional reading

Looking for more resources? We’ve got you covered!

• CannaMD: MMTC Resource Page
• Florida Department of Health: MMTC Page

Coming up next...

Can’t believe we’re almost done! On the last page, we’ll provide links and next steps for getting started, as well as contact information so we can all stay in touch!

Ready to get started?

Find out if you qualify for medical marijuana treatment for FREE by completing a brief application or calling 1 (855) 420-9170!
WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Before purchasing marijuana from a medical marijuana treatment center (or dispensary), Florida patients must first qualify for a medical marijuana certification; CannaMD provides qualified patients with the state-required recommendation to complete this process.

Focused on evidence-based application of medical cannabis research, CannaMD offers a streamlined pre-qualification process, letting patients spend more time with licensed physicians.

To find out if you qualify for free, fill out a quick application or give us a call at 1 (855) 420-9170! We have convenient locations statewide; use our interactive map to find a doctor near you!

To learn more, check out some of our favorite resources:

- Medical Marijuana Research Studies (By Condition)
- Top Cannabis Studies to Share with Skeptics
Thanks for reading! Let us know if there’s anything we can do to help!

www.CannaMD.com
1 (855) 420-9170

For media inquires, please email: press@cannamd.com

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