

## What is marijuana?

Marijuana comes from the cannabis plant and contains more than 100 chemical substances known as cannabinoids, which act on cell receptors in the brain and body.

## Medicinal marijuana and its components

Medicinal marijuana requires approval from the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) to be prescribed. The two main cannabinoids which have therapeutic benefits are:

**Delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (Delta-9-THC)** — responsible for many of the effects of recreational marijuana use  
(main psychoactive component) behavioural and psychological effects include euphoria, sedation/relaxation, disinhibition



**Cannabidiol (CBD)** — responsible for many of the medicinal properties of marijuana  
(non-psychoactive) behavioural and psychological effects include anxiety reduction and deep relaxation



*Note: Medicinal marijuana does not include marijuana sourced by an individual online or without a prescription, even if it is purchased for medicinal purposes.*



In Australia, the three major types of medicinal marijuana prescribed are: mainly CBD, mainly THC, and CBD & THC combined.



The most common product prescribed in Australia is a pure CBD oil and contains no THC, meaning they have much less effect on mood, awareness, thoughts, feelings and behaviour.



Compared to marijuana sourced by an individual (i.e. from a friend or dealer), medicinal marijuana is tightly regulated, meaning there is greater transparency on the origin and quality of the substance.

## Does marijuana use impair driving?

Substantial evidence indicates an association between marijuana use and increased motor vehicle crash risk, with marijuana use found to impair driving performance and cognitive function.

THC affects parts of the brain that regulate movement, coordination, learning, memory, and higher-level cognitive functions (14). Acute use has been shown to “moderately diminish virtually every driving-related capacity”<sup>3</sup>, including:



Coordination  
(e.g. lane position)



Cognition;



Attention and vigilance



Reaction time



Higher following distance



Tracking

*(Insufficient research has been conducted to definitively conclude that CBD alone impacts driving performance.)*

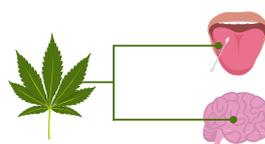


## Did you know?

The impairing effects of marijuana are amplified when consumed with alcohol or other central nervous system depressants.

## Is it illegal to drive while taking medicinal cannabis in Australia?

Presently, in Australia, is it an offence to drive:



With the presence of THC in oral fluid, blood or urine; or

Under the influence of THC.

The cut-off amount of THC under police testing is zero, and there is no medical defence for driving with the presence of (or impaired by) THC.

Those taking CBD-only medicines can lawfully drive if they are not impaired.



## Stay informed: The landscape surrounding medicinal marijuana in Australia is evolving fast

- The TGA has approved in excess of 91,000 applications for medicinal cannabis products; this number will likely continue to increase with their decision to allow certain low-dose CBD products for purchase without prescription.
- In 2020 a Victorian parliamentary bill was proposed for medicinal marijuana patients with a prescription of THC to be allowed to drive legally, if not impaired. At present, the bill is being debated.