

# Cannabis-based medicinal products

Information for the public

Published: 18 December 2019

[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

Some cannabis-based products are thought to help with certain medical problems that are hard to treat, but it has not been clear how well they work or how safe they are to use. We have looked at the evidence for using cannabis-based medicines when other treatments haven't helped people with chronic pain, severe epilepsy, and muscle stiffness (spasticity) from multiple sclerosis (MS). We also looked at how well they work for nausea and vomiting caused by chemotherapy.

We have not been able to recommend cannabis-based medicines in every case. For some conditions we need more evidence on their safety and benefits. Adults with MS can be offered a trial of cannabis-based mouth spray to help with spasticity, and a medicine called nabilone may be an option with other anti-sickness drugs during chemotherapy. But we are not able to recommend any cannabis-based medicines for pain, or for most types of epilepsy.

More research is needed, particularly to understand any benefits and risks of these medicines for children and young people.

## Making decisions together

A specialist doctor will need to prescribe cannabis-based medicines to start with. They should give you clear information about the benefits and harms of the medicine, any risk of dependence and explain how it may affect you. They should listen carefully to your views and concerns.

If you are already taking a cannabis product that has not been recommended, you and your doctor can work out together the best time to stop.

If you cannot understand the information you are given, tell your health professional.

Read more about [making decisions about your care](#).

## Where can I find out more?

The organisations below can give you more advice and support.

- [United Patients Alliance](#)
- [Epilepsy Action](#), 0808 800 5050
- [Epilepsy Society](#), 01494 601 400
- [Young Epilepsy](#), 01342 831 342
- [Multiple Sclerosis Society](#), 0808 800 8000
- [Multiple Sclerosis Trust](#), 0800 323839
- [MS-UK](#), 0800 783 0518

NICE is not responsible for the content of these websites.

To share an experience of care you have received, contact your local [Healthwatch](#).

We wrote this guideline with people who have been affected by conditions covered by the guideline and staff who treat and support them. All the decisions are based on the best research available.

ISBN: 978-1-4731-3579-6