

# Using Cannabis in the Hospital

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**Nova Scotia Health sites are smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free. Thank you!**

- In Canada, it is legal to buy cannabis without a prescription.
- In Nova Scotia, you must be 19 years old or older to buy, use, or grow cannabis.

## What is cannabis used for?

- People may use cannabis to:
  - › Help with symptoms of a disease or a health condition
  - › Feel calm or relax
  - › Fall asleep

## How is cannabis used to treat diseases or health conditions?

- The medical benefits of cannabis are still being studied.
- At this time, there is no evidence that cannabis can treat or cure any disease or health condition.
- There is some evidence that cannabis may help with the symptoms of some diseases or health conditions.

## **Does cannabis have side effects?**

- Cannabis can have side effects. These may include:
  - › Feeling confused or anxious
  - › Feeling sleepy
  - › Feeling dizzy or light-headed
  - › Fainting
  - › Lowered inhibition (less control over what you may say or do)
  - › Being less coordinated (how you move and balance)
  - › Dry mouth
  - › Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach)
  - › Stomach pain
  - › Vomiting (throwing up)
  - › Fast heart beat
  - › Changes in blood pressure
  - › Changes in blood sugar level
- Cannabis can also interact with (affect) other medications you are taking or other medical treatments you are having. This can cause other side effects.
  - › For example, if you are taking blood thinners (like warfarin), cannabis can cause more bleeding.

**The side effects or interactions between cannabis and other medications or treatments can be serious or even cause death.**

**Tell your health care providers if you use cannabis for any reason.**

They need to know this so they can:

- › plan your care.
- › watch for side effects or interactions with other medications you are taking.

## **How can I get cannabis?**

- In Nova Scotia, doctors and nurse practitioners (NPs) can prescribe cannabis. They can write an authorized prescription and send it:
  - › to a licensed cannabis producer. The licensed producer will send the cannabis to you through the mail.
- or**
- › to Health Canada. Health Canada will register you so you can grow your own medical cannabis.

- Any person of legal age can buy cannabis from the Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation (NSLC) in-person or online to use:
  - › recreationally.
  - › to help the symptoms of a disease or health condition.
- You **do not** need an authorized prescription from a doctor or an NP to buy cannabis from the NSLC, even if you are buying it to help with medical symptoms.
- The only legal way to buy cannabis in Nova Scotia is:
  - › from the NSLC.
  - or**
  - › from a licensed cannabis producer (with an authorized prescription from a doctor or an NP).
- The licensed producers who mail cannabis are the same licensed producers who supply cannabis to the NSLC.
- You may also be able to go to a private cannabis consultation clinic to get a prescription from a doctor or an NP.
  - › You may need a referral to get an appointment at a private clinic.
  - › The clinic may charge a fee.

## Can I use cannabis when I am in the hospital?

- When you are admitted to the hospital, a doctor or an NP will check if it is safe for you to keep using cannabis while you are in the hospital. This will depend on your condition and what your medical problems are.
- If your doctor or NP decides that it is safe and that it may help for you to use cannabis while you are in the hospital, you must supply your own cannabis. **The hospital does not supply cannabis.**

## Which cannabis products can I bring with me to the hospital?

- You may bring any type of cannabis product (like oil, gummies, capsules, or dried cannabis for smoking or vaping) to the hospital if it is from:
  - › A licensed producer**or**
  - › The NSLC
- **If you are being admitted to the hospital, bring all of your cannabis products (including dried cannabis) in their original packaging with you.**
  - › Nova Scotia Health is scent-free. The original packaging will help contain the smell of the cannabis.

- You may only use cannabis from a licensed producer or the NSLC in the hospital.

**Do not bring cannabis from a dispensary or a supplier to the hospital. This is not allowed.** We do not know how strong these products are, or if there are other substances in them that may not be safe for you or other people.

## **What types of cannabis products can I use while I am in the hospital?**

- If your doctor or NP says it is OK for you to use cannabis in the hospital, you may use:
  - › Oil
  - › Gummies
  - › Capsules
  - › Other types of cannabis that are not taken by smoking or vaping
- **You cannot smoke or vape cannabis on Nova Scotia Health property.**
  - › You must leave Nova Scotia Health property to smoke or vape cannabis. **Nova Scotia Health is smoke-free and vape-free.**
- Nurses at Nova Scotia Health can help you take cannabis if you cannot take it yourself. They can only do this if you have a prescription for cannabis from a doctor or an NP.

## How do I store my cannabis in the hospital?

- **Keep your cannabis:**
  - › **in a child-proof package.**
  - › **in a secure place (like your locked bedside table).**
- Some units may ask you to bring your own locker or lock box (and your own lock) to put your cannabis in. Other units may have these things for you to use.
- If there are safety concerns about keeping cannabis at your bedside, you may need to store your cannabis in a different place. Unit staff will talk with you about this, if needed.
- If your nurse helps you take your cannabis, they will keep your cannabis in a secure place (like the unit medication room).



## **Learn more about cannabis**

### **Cannabis in Canada: Get the facts**

- Government of Canada
  - › [www.canada.ca/cannabis](http://www.canada.ca/cannabis)

### **Medical use of cannabis**

- Government of Canada
  - › [www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/topics/cannabis-for-medical-purposes.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/topics/cannabis-for-medical-purposes.html)

### **Cannabis**

- Nova Scotia Health Library Services
  - › <https://library.nshealth.ca/Cannabis/Patients>

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This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:  
[www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources](https://www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources)

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:  
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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