

## CBD Oil Facts: Clearing Up the Confusion



Cannabidiol, commonly known as CBD, is a hot topic. CBD oil is an even hotter commodity. It's everywhere; stores, signs, social media. Moreover, it's being touted for a wide range of physical ailments and mental health conditions, ranging from anxiety to inflammation to insomnia.

There are many unanswered questions regarding the safety and efficacy of CBD oil, including determining standard and proper dosing, so it's important to look beyond the wild claims as well as the promising benefits and consider the concerns: contaminants, toxicity, drug interactions, cumulative exposure, and side effects, as well as legal and regulatory issues.

### CBD and Its Derivatives

To start, let's look at what it is. CBD is second only to THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) as the most prevalent active ingredient of marijuana. By itself, CBD does not cause a "high" though neurobiologists say it does, like THC, affect both mind and behavior – just differently than THC.<sup>1</sup>

While CBD is one of hundreds of components of marijuana, it's also a component that can be derived from the hemp plant, a close cousin of marijuana or cannabis. Hemp-derived CBD oil, containing THC content of no more than three tenths of a percent, is federally legal in all states – including Ohio – whereas marijuana derived CBD is not. In Ohio, the sale and use of CBD oil derived from marijuana must follow the guidelines of Ohio's medical marijuana program, meaning it can only be sold by state-licensed dispensaries to persons who legally hold an Ohio medical marijuana card.

### Lack of Oversight: Why It's a Problem

Currently, CBD oil of any derivative is neither approved nor regulated by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA). Since CBD oil falls

### Good News

Though the exaggerated claims as a "miracle product" have yet to be scientifically proven, CBD has been shown effective as a treatment for two rare and severe forms of epilepsy. In 2018, following three randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trials – which including a scrutinizing look at safety risks, including the potential for liver toxicity – the FDA approved Epidiolex, the first drug containing a purified drug substance derived from cannabis.

outside of FDA regulation, there is no oversight on how CBD oils are processed, packaged, or labeled. Therefore, there's no assurance of what's actually in these products.

Independent tests and studies have made headlines, putting the purity of some CBD oil into question. One such study found that fewer than 1/3 of tested products actually contained the amount of CBD listed on the label. Others found counterfeit or contaminated products or concentrations of THC.<sup>2</sup>

## Safety Concerns

Unknown and unwanted ingredients, which are not listed, not regulated, and not properly dosed are cause for concern, if not alarm. For example, someone who uses CBD oil that, unknowing to the user, contains THC, may fail a workplace drug test and violate drug-free workplace policies.

According to the FDA, which is working to understand the science, safety, and quality of such products, the potential harm, side effects, and unknowns of CBD include:<sup>3</sup>

- Liver injury
- Altering the effectiveness of other medications, such as blood thinners
- Increased sedation and drowsiness when used with alcohol or other drugs that slow brain activity
- Male reproductive toxicity
- Gastrointestinal distress
- Irritability, agitation, and mood changes

## About This Campaign

Because much of the public conversation surrounding marijuana has been based on anecdotes rather than science, Prevention Action Alliance and the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services created this campaign to help people better understand the facts about marijuana and its effects.

If you found this article helpful, we encourage you to share it with others. You can also find other fact sheets about marijuana at: [preventionactionalliance.org/marijuana](http://preventionactionalliance.org/marijuana)

If you have concerns about your own use of marijuana or a loved one's, and wish to seek help, go to: [findtreatment.samhsa.gov/](http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/)

## Contact Us

For more information about CBD, please contact us at:  
Prevention Action Alliance  
(614) 540-9985  
[preventionactionalliance.org](http://preventionactionalliance.org)

## About Us

Prevention  
Action Alliance



Prevention Action Alliance is a 501(c)3 nonprofit located in Columbus, Ohio. We're dedicated to leading healthy communities in the prevention of substance misuse and the promotion of mental health wellness. Learn more at [preventionactionalliance.org](http://preventionactionalliance.org).

The mission of the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) is to provide statewide leadership on the topics of mental health and addiction prevention, treatment, and recovery. Learn more about OhioMHAS at [mha.ohio.gov](http://mha.ohio.gov).

1. [pbs.org/newshour/science/is-cbd-legal-heres-what-you-need-to-know-according-to-science](http://pbs.org/newshour/science/is-cbd-legal-heres-what-you-need-to-know-according-to-science)

2. [health.harvard.edu/blog/why-are-women-using-cbd-products-and-do-they-work-2019111818317](http://health.harvard.edu/blog/why-are-women-using-cbd-products-and-do-they-work-2019111818317)

3. [fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/what-you-need-know-and-what-were-working-find-out-about-products-containing-cannabis-or-cannabis](http://fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/what-you-need-know-and-what-were-working-find-out-about-products-containing-cannabis-or-cannabis)