

A Note to Elderly Patients

If you're considering adding medical marijuana to your treatment for chronic pain or cancer or any of the other indicated reasons, it might be a good idea, but I can understand your resistance. Even though this drug has been available for three thousand years as a medicinal herb, there's been a lot of controversy surrounding the drug in the United States. Back in 1910, the different states here in the United States started to ban medical marijuana. And then in 1937, the Marijuana Tax Act made marijuana illegal across all 50 states. Richard Nixon signed the Controlled Substance Act, which placed a federal ban on marijuana, heroin, cocaine, and narcotics. It wasn't until the 1990s when California led the way in our country by thinking about marijuana again as a medicinal herb and helping to promote the legalization of medical marijuana. Since seniors are using one third of all of the prescription drugs on the market, and they're expensive and wrought with side effects, it might be reasonable to consider a different alternative. Under the analysis performed by the National Institute for Drug Abuse, it has been found that when medical marijuana is legalized in a state and dispensaries are available in that state, it is linked to fewer deaths by opioids, less treatment with opioids, and a decreased number of people who are self-reporting opioid misuse.

So in seniors, the study of medical marijuana and its use and its efficacy was published in 2018. They asked people who were getting medical marijuana from a dispensary for at least six months to answer a questionnaire. They offered the questionnaire over a two year period to anybody 65 years or older, and the results were very reassuring. Out of this population, 2736 people completed the questionnaire with the average age of 74 years old, give or take seven and a half years, 66.6% reported decreases in pain! On a 1-10 visual analog scale, patients described their pain level falling to a level between 8 and 4.

In addition, 60.8% of cancer patients reported reduction in their cancer related symptoms or in symptoms related to side effects from their cancer chemotherapy. At six months, 93.7% of the patients filling out the questionnaire reported improvement in their symptoms overall. The most common adverse effect was in less than 10% of patients and reported as dizziness and dry mouth. And at six months, 18.1% of patients had either stopped or significantly reduced their opioid administration.

So if you're interested in making some changes and adding this medication, recognizing the historical significance and all of the issues that have blurred this product in the past, it might be worth giving it a try. Maybe you're concerned that you might get high or feel like you're out of control, or feel dissociated in some way. I'm gonna create a video now to help you think about what to do in case you get too high. Coming right up.