

Cutting through the haze of confusion surrounding *medical marijuana*



You've talked with your doctor about using medical marijuana to treat your health condition. What now?

How do they prescribe it? Hundreds of strains? How do you take it? What product will work best for you? What about the cost? And where do you even GET medical marijuana?

It's a different kind of treatment

Let's face it, medical marijuana is different than most medicines we're used to taking. Doctors let you know how much to take each day. But with medical marijuana it's often left up to you to choose the right strain to take and how to take it.

The structure and support available with more traditional, prescription drug treatments has been missing for people who use marijuana for medical purposes. Our program changes that.

Help when you're out of your element

We've partnered with Shoppers Drug Mart Corporation to combine responsible coverage for medical marijuana with ongoing guidance and support designed to help you cut through the confusion. Because figuring out even part of your treatment plan on your own isn't an easy task.

What's 'medical' about marijuana?

Basically, medical marijuana is marijuana that's meant for use as medicine. A doctor authorizes you to use it for a specific health need. Producers are licensed to sell it by Health Canada.

Did you know there are hundreds of different strains of medical marijuana available? Each strain is made from one or more of the active ingredients found in a cannabis plant.

What do we mean when we talk about strains?

Different kinds of marijuana are called strains. It's easiest to think of strains in relation to dog breeds.

Dogs are all part of the same species, but different breeds have different characteristics. The same is true for marijuana.

Each strain can be thought of as a 'breed'. Each breed, or strain of cannabis plant, is developed to produce specific desired traits.

When a new strain is created it's often given a name that speaks to what it looks like, where it comes from, or the effect it has on patients. Sometimes the plants are named by their producers, or sometimes by very creative consumers!

Just how many ways CAN you take medical marijuana?

Dried, capsules, directly through oils, inhaled using a vaporizer or vape pen...

There are many ways to take medical marijuana. The choice depends on your preference and condition. Some methods act faster, bringing quick relief. Others may bring a delayed, but longer lasted effect.

One method isn't necessarily better than another. The level of evidence supporting the use of medical marijuana may vary, depending on how you take it.

Important things to keep in mind once you've been approved

1 | Choose the product that's best suited to your needs and is covered under your plan.

2 | You need to buy the medical marijuana over the phone through the Shoppers Drug Mart Cannabis Care Centre. The team will arrange to have it mailed directly to you – it's not available for purchase or pick-up at Shoppers Drug Mart stores. Claims can't be paid through our program if it's bought somewhere else.

Applying for coverage

Before ordering, fill out our prior authorization form and send it to us.

We'll confirm you meet the program's rules for coverage. Medical marijuana is only covered to help with specific health conditions, and when other medicines have been tried first without success.

You can find the prior authorization form when you sign in to your plan member site at manulife.ca/planmember.



Guidance

Once you're approved for coverage through our program, you get a welcome call from a pharmacist at the Shoppers Drug Mart Cannabis Care Centre.

The pharmacist asks some questions, so they can advise you on the strains of medical marijuana that may help your health condition and the different ways to take it. With their guidance, you can choose the product that best meets your needs and is covered under your plan.



Support

You then get ongoing support, tailored to fit your needs. This includes access to counselling, education, phone and email support, and help to manage any side-effects and stick to your treatment plan.

Do you have questions?

Give us a call at 1-800-268-6195 from Monday to Friday, between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. ET.

NOTE: If you're travelling, keep in mind that leaving or entering Canada with medical marijuana continues to be illegal. For more information, check the Government of Canada Travel and Tourism site at travel.gc.ca.

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