

## Medical Marijuana (Medical Cannabis)

### What is medical marijuana?

The term medical marijuana, or medical cannabis, refers to using the cannabis plant or its extracts to treat symptoms of illness. Cannabis plants contain 483 compounds. Tetrahydrocannabinol (**THC**) and cannabidiol (**CBD**), two of the main components, can be useful in treating pain, nausea, and poor appetite.

### What forms does medical marijuana come in?

There are many different ways you can take medical marijuana. The two primary methods are:

- an oil capsule you take by mouth that has a long-lasting effect but takes some time to work
- to inhale or “vape”, which has a much quicker effect, but does not last as long

Under New York State (NYS) law, smokable and edible forms of marijuana are not allowed.

### How can medical marijuana help me?

Medical marijuana does not cure cancer. It has been shown, however, to help with some symptoms common among cancer patients such as chronic pain, nausea, vomiting, poor appetite, and some forms of muscle spasms. There is ongoing research for new applications for medical marijuana to help treat new symptoms or diseases while ensuring patient safety.

### Is medical marijuana expensive?

There is a \$50 annual fee\* to maintain your medical marijuana certification with the NYS Department of Health. It is wise to start with only filling a 5-day supply at first, to see how effective it may be before committing to a full month, as once it is purchased, unused product cannot be returned. Medical marijuana is not covered by health insurance, and ranges from \$150 to 450 per month. Prices vary between dispensing facilities and cost will depend on how much product is purchased.

### What are the side effects? Can I get addicted?

In addition to the benefits, such as treating nausea and pain, there are several risks. Possible side effects include increased heart rate, confusion, difficulty thinking, and mood changes. Long term risks are higher for children whose brains are still developing but memory problems may develop in adults too. Marijuana is a controlled substance and your use of this drug will be monitored.

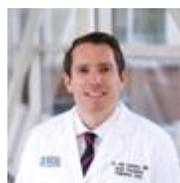
### Meet Our Doctors – Supportive & Palliative Care Program



Amy Case MD, FAAHPM



Michelle Walter DO



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Our program staff includes a highly trained team of nurse practitioners, nurses, social workers, psychologists, and more.

## How do I get medical marijuana?

First, you must have a qualifying condition such as cancer, neuropathy, HIV/AIDS, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis (MS), inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), chronic pain, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and, added in July 2018, ‘any condition for which an opioid could be prescribed’. You must also have an associated condition such as wasting syndrome, severe or chronic pain, severe nausea, seizures, or severe or persistent muscle spasms, PTSD, or opioid use disorder. A medical provider, such as one that works at Roswell Park’s Supportive and Palliative Care Program, would evaluate you to see if you are eligible.

## After the doctor determines I am a good candidate, what do I do next?

- We will ask for your photo ID, such as a NY State driver’s license, and make a copy for our records.
- We will enter your personal information on the NYS Department of Health website to certify you and then give you the paper certification document.
- Login to the NYS Department of Health website <https://my.ny.gov> and follow the printed instructions on the certificate. (If you do not have a NY.gov ID, click on the *Don't have an Account?* button to create one. If you have used the DMVonline services, you may have created a NY.gov ID at that time.)
- Click *Health Applications*, then *Medical Marijuana Data Management System* to register. (Click on Help for step-by-step instructions.)
- Register. You will need to provide proof of identity and residency during registration. (Example: ID number from your NYS driver’s license or NYS Non-Driver ID card.)
- There is a \$50 application fee\*. *\*As of April 2018, the NYS medical marijuana website states: “Pursuant to the Compassionate Care Act there is a \$50 application fee; the Department is currently waiving the \$50 fee for all patients and their designated caregivers. Simply select "Bill Me Later" when registering and the application fee will be waived.”*
- You will receive a medical marijuana card in the mail within a couple of weeks.
- Take your card to an NY State-approved dispensary. There is one in Amherst and one in Williamsville.

## How does the doctor monitor me while on medical marijuana?

The prescribing clinic will require a toxicology screen (urine test) before you begin using medical marijuana and will monitor you periodically while you are on the drug. It is expected you will obtain the drug from the dispensary. This will be verified by the certifying provider on the NYS Prescription Monitoring Program website.

## Where Can I get More Information?

**NYS Medical Marijuana Program:** [www.health.ny.gov/regulations/medical\\_marijuana](http://www.health.ny.gov/regulations/medical_marijuana)

Information and registration for patients and designated caregivers; names and locations of dispensaries

National Institute on Drug Abuse: [www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana-medicine](http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana-medicine)

Marijuana as Medicine (Revised May 2018)

