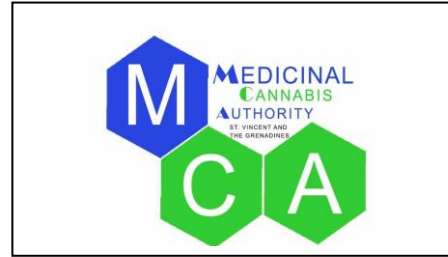
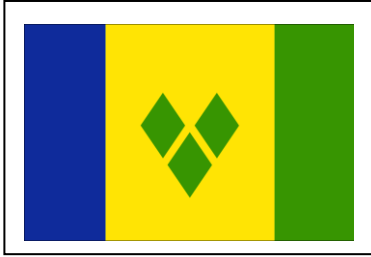


St. Vincent and the Grenadines Medicinal Cannabis Authority



*“Promoting good health through responsible use of Medicinal Cannabis
Flower, Extracts and Products!”*

Consumer Information—Cannabis

In December 2018 both sides of the house of parliament passed into law The Medicinal Cannabis Industry Act (MCIA). The MCIA set out the articles under which the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Medicinal Cannabis Authority (MCA) would come into existence.

Under the MCIA, legal access to Cannabis (Weed, Ganja, Marijuana) for medicinal purposes must be gained via MCA Certified Physicians. Medicinal Cannabis products must come from licensed farmers, and licensed producers. These Cannabis products must only be received by patients or their caregivers from licensed pharmacies and approved hospitals and health clinics. Complete lists of authorised farmers, producers, pharmacies, hospitals, health clinics and medical practitioners can be obtained through the MCA.

Cannabis is currently approved for the treatment of 20 Qualifying Conditions (QC). A patient must be seen by a MCA authorised physician and diagnosed with a QC, then be issued a Medical Certificate, a Medicinal Cannabis Identification Card, and a prescription for Medicinal Cannabis (MC). The patient may then legally purchase and possess Medicinal Cannabis from approved pharmacies.

The recreational use of Cannabis in St. Vincent and the Grenadines is still illegal, and possessing and using Cannabis (flowers) buds, extracts or products without a valid Medicinal Cannabis certificate and Identification Card is also illegal.

This leaflet is intended to provide the general public with basic, but accurate information regarding Medicinal Cannabis. You are encouraged to visit the MCA website at <https://mca.vc/> and to contact your MCA authorised health care practitioner if you have questions that are not answered in this publication.

Precautions/Warnings

- > Keep all Cannabis including Cannabis oils or edibles out of the reach of children and pets;
- > Cannabis contains hundreds of substances, some of which can affect the proper functioning and development of the brain and central nervous system of minors;
- > The use of these products involves risks to health, some of which may not be known or fully understood;
- > Studies supporting the safety and efficacy of Cannabis for therapeutic purposes are growing in number;
- > More study is required to understand the effects of Cannabis on the developing brains of children and adolescents;
- > Pets, such as Dogs, may become unpredictable and aggressive if intoxicated;
- > Smoking Cannabis is not recommended due to the risk of lung disease;
- > Do not smoke or vaporize cannabis in the presence of children;
- > Using cannabis or any cannabis product can impair your concentration, your ability to think and make decisions, and slow your reaction time and coordination. This can affect your motor skills, including your ability to drive and operate heavy equipment. It can also increase anxiety and cause panic attacks, and in some cases cause paranoia and hallucinations in susceptible individuals;
- > Cognitive impairment may be greatly increased when cannabis is consumed along with alcohol or other drugs, that affect the activity of the nervous system (e.g. Opioids, sleeping pills, other psychoactive drugs)

What may cannabis be used for?

Your MCA authorised health care practitioner may prescribe the use of cannabis for the treatment of one or more of the following Qualifying Conditions (QC), which have not responded to conventional medical treatments. These (QC) currently include:

- a) Pain associated with cancer;
- b) Severe and treatment resistant vomiting and Nausea due to chemotherapy;
- c) Status of human immunodeficiency virus or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome;
- d) Parkinson's Disease;
- e) Multiple Sclerosis;
- f) Severe Intractable Epilepsy;
- g) Damage to the nervous tissue of the spinal cord with objective neurological indication of intractable spasticity;
- h) Post-traumatic stress disorder;
- i) Rheumatoid Arthritis or any similar Chronic Autoimmune Inflammatory disorder with severe debilitating conditions;
- j) Autism;

- k) Glaucoma;
- l) Sickle Cell Anemia;
- m) Anxiety;
- n) Sleep Disorders;
- o) Chronic Pain;
- p) Alzheimer's Disease;
- q) Crohn's Disease;
- r) Hepatitis B;
- s) Dravet's Syndrome; and
- t) Depression.

As time goes on other conditions may be added to this list.

The potential therapeutic and adverse effects associated with cannabis use may vary depending on the amount of cannabis used, the concentration of cannabinoids in the cannabis product, the frequency of cannabis use, the patient's age and medical condition, previous experience with cannabis or cannabinoids, and the use of other prescription or non-prescription drugs. For more detailed information on potential therapeutic uses and adverse effects, please consult the MCA Website and your MCA authorised practitioner.

The active components in cannabis?

The active ingredients which are unique to cannabis are called cannabinoids. The two most well studied cannabinoids are:

- > Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)
- > Cannabidiol (CBD)

The type and amount of these ingredients may vary depending on the cannabis strain or preparation. Research continues on the other 70 cannabinoids found in cannabis.

What other components are found in cannabis?

There are over 70 different cannabinoids as well as hundreds of terpenes, flavonoids and other compounds in cannabis. Terpenes give cannabis and other plants their smells and flavours. Flavonoids give plants and fruits their colours. It is of note that many of the compounds found in tobacco smoke are also found in cannabis smoke.

How do the compounds in cannabis act?

THC, acts on very specific targets found in the body known as cannabinoid receptors. Other cannabinoids, such as CBD, also have targets other than the cannabinoid receptors. Terpenes and flavonoids are also biologically active in the human body. Cannabinoid receptors are found throughout the body, in most tissues and organs, but they are especially numerous in the brain, nervous system and on immune cells. Cannabinoid receptors are involved in the regulation of many bodily functions including: brain and nervous system activity, heart rate and blood pressure, digestion, inflammation, immune system activity, perception of pain, reproduction, wake/sleep cycle, regulation of stress and emotional state and many other functions. For more detailed information, please consult the MCA website or your MCA Authorised medical practitioner.

When should Cannabis be avoided?

Cannabis should be avoided if you:

- > are under the age of 21;
- > are allergic to any of the cannabinoids or to smoke;
- > have serious liver, kidney, heart or lung disease;
- > have a personal or family history of serious mental disorders such as schizophrenia, psychosis, or bipolar disorder;
- > are pregnant, are planning to get pregnant, or breast-feeding;
- > are a man who wishes to start a family;
- > have a history of alcohol or drug abuse or substance dependence.

Let your MCA Authorised health care practitioner know if you have any of these conditions.

Cannabis and Drug Interactions

Cannabis interacts with several drugs. Make sure to tell your Authorised Health Care Practitioner which prescription drugs, non-prescription drugs or herbal products you are currently taking, particularly:

- > Any drugs which slow down the Central Nervous System, causing drowsiness. These may include sleeping pills, tranquilizers, some pain medications, some allergy or cold medications, or anti-seizure medications.
- > Other drugs may include antiretroviral drugs used in the treatment of HIV/AIDS, certain anti-depressants, stomach acid inhibitors, certain antibiotic and antifungal medications, certain Heart medications, Certain Blood thinners, and Saint John's Wort.

Dosing and Route

Many dosing and route options are available for medicinal cannabis today there are:

1. Pills,
2. Tinctures,
3. Oils for vaping,
4. Concentrates for vaping,
5. Transdermal patches,
6. Oils,
7. Spays,
8. raw dried flowers which can be vaporized, and
9. Rectal and Vaginal suppositories.

Your MCA Authorised healthcare practitioner will help you choose the best option for you. For more information please consult “The Medicinal Cannabis Primer” available on the MCA website.

Cannabis Overdose

The symptoms of overdose may include: sleepiness; confusion; disorientation; clumsiness/loss of coordination; fainting; dizziness; chest pain; fast, slow or pounding heartbeat; panic attacks; and seizures.

Seek immediate medical attention in case of overdose, and especially if persons are experiencing chest pain, panic attacks, hallucinations, or if the person becomes unconsciousness.

Cannabis should be used with caution in patients receiving other psychoactive medications, because of the potential for greatly enhanced effects on the brain and other parts of the nervous system. An overdose can also occur if a patient is smoking or vaporizing cannabis and at the same time consuming orally administered cannabinoids whether from prescription cannabinoid medications, or from consumption of oils, teas, or edibles.

Possible side effects associated medicinal cannabis use:

The information on the side effects associated with the therapeutic use of cannabis is not completely known. Some of the more well-known side effects are intoxication-like reactions including:

- > dizziness; drowsiness; feeling faint or lightheaded; fatigue, headache; impaired memory and disturbances in attention; concentration and ability to think and make decisions;
- > disorientation; confusion, feeling drunk; feeling abnormal or having abnormal thoughts; feeling “too high”; feelings of unreality; feeling an extreme slowing of time;
- > suspiciousness; nervousness; episodes of anxiety resembling a panic attack; paranoia (loss of contact with reality); hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that do not exist);
- > impairments in motor skills and perception; altered bodily perceptions; loss of full control of bodily movements; falls, increased appetite;
- > dry mouth; throat irritation; coughing; worsening of seizures; hypersensitivity reactions (contact dermatitis/hives); cause the levels certain medications in the body to be higher or lower than expected; nausea, vomiting; and fast heartbeat.

Long term recreational of cannabis use may:

- > increase the risk of triggering or aggravating psychiatric and/or mood disorders (schizophrenia, psychosis, anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder);
- > increase the risk of developing respiratory infections or chronic cough (when smoked);
- > decrease sperm count, concentration and motility, and increase abnormal sperm morphology;
- > negatively impact the behavioral and cognitive development of children born to mothers who used cannabis during pregnancy;
- > negatively affect cognitive functions (ability to think and make decisions);
- > lead to a decrease in one or more of the effects of cannabis (tolerance);
- > lead to withdrawal-type symptoms when use is abruptly halted or discontinued.

Withdrawal symptoms may include one or more of the following:

1. Anger or aggression,
2. Irritability,
3. Anxiety,
4. Vivid nightmares/strange dreams,
5. Insomnia/sleep disturbances,
6. Craving,
7. Headaches,
8. Restlessness,
9. Decreased appetite or weight loss,
10. Depressed mood,
11. Chills,
12. Stomach pain,
13. Shakiness
14. Sweating; and
15. Could result in psychological dependence (addiction).

These lists of adverse events in relation to recreational use is not exhaustive. If you or a loved one experience unexpected adverse events while using cannabis for medicinal purposes or recreationally, stop consuming cannabis immediately, and contact a health care practitioner or the emergency department of the closest hospital or health clinic.

How to store Cannabis and Cannabis products

Dried Marijuana plant material and Cannabis products should be stored in a cool place, preferably away from light and in an air tight container. Please see the manufacturer's instructions on the product label for recommended storage conditions.

Raw cannabis flower and cannabis products must be kept out of the reach of children, and in a safe place to prevent their theft, misuse and accidental ingestion by children or others. A patient's prescribed medicinal cannabis should not be shared with anyone else.

Reporting Suspected Adverse Effects

You can report any suspected adverse reactions associated with the use of cannabis or a cannabis product to the MCA Vigilance Program by informing the staff of the Pharmacy where you purchased the product, or by informing your authorised health care practitioner.

For more information

If you have further questions please consult the MCA's website for the Medicinal Cannabis Primer or your MCA authorised health care practitioner.