

Well



& Wiser

What to know about
cannabis as we age



Did you know?

Cannabis can interact
with medication you're taking.




What we've learned about aging and cannabis use.

As we age, the body works differently. Sleep patterns shift. We carry less water. Metabolism slows. The liver and kidneys work more slowly.

This changes how your body processes cannabis, affecting you in ways that are important to understand.

- Effects may feel stronger or less predictable than in the past
- The experience may last longer
- Balance and reaction time may be impaired
- Medications can interact more easily
- Cannabis use (smoking and edibles) has been linked to cardiovascular disease

Why that could matter to you

-  **Memory issues**
-  **Loss of balance and increased fall risk**
-  **Interruptions in sleep and daily readiness**
-  **New or worsening anxiety or depression**



Did you know?

People can become addicted to cannabis.

Cannabis + other substances

Using cannabis at the same time as alcohol or other medications can make the effects stronger and increase risk of side effects.

If you experience new or intensified side effects,

it's always a good idea to talk with your trusted healthcare provider.

What to watch for

- Difficulty focusing or memory problems
- Anxiety or depression
- Repeated nausea or vomiting (cannabinoid hyperemesis)
- Trouble cutting back, or stopping use.

What you can do

If you choose to use, try these tips.

- **Start low, go slow.** Start with a very low amount. Wait to see how it affects you before taking more.
- **Be careful with edibles.** Edibles (gummies, baked goods) take longer to work, up to 2 hours.
- **Do not mix.** Avoid using cannabis with alcohol. The combination can make you dizzy and confused.
- **Do not drive if you have used cannabis.** It is unsafe and illegal.



Talk with your doctor

If you are considering using cannabis or cannabis products, make sure your doctor knows your current medications and supplements and ask them:

- Are there interactions with my medications?
- How does cannabis affect my lungs?
- Can using cannabis impact my heart health?

Quick facts

- **Sensitivity to cannabis** can change over time.
- **Edibles can take longer to feel the effects** and last longer than expected.
- **Cannabis use can lead to memory issues, anxiety and depression.**
- **Cannabis can affect balance and coordination, increasing fall risk.**


Help for you or someone you care about


Concerned about your or a loved one's cannabis use? Call VT Helplink for free, confidential support at **802-565-4565** or visit VTHelplink.com, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

If someone is not waking up or having trouble breathing, call 911.



To find resources and support near you, call:

 **Support and Services at Home (SASH)**
802-863-2224

 **Vermont Area Agencies on Aging Senior HelpLine**
1-800-642-5119

 **Vermont Department of Health**
HealthVermont.gov/WellAndWiser

