



FACT SHEET: PETS AND MARIJUANA

WHAT IS MARIJUANA?

Recreational and most medical marijuana products are prepared using the Cannabis sativa plant, usually by drying its flowers and leaves. More than 100 chemicals, known as cannabinoids, come from the cannabis plant. "Marijuana" refers to products containing bioactive cannabinoid compounds.

Recreational marijuana, which is smoked, vaporized or baked into oral preparations for humans, contains high levels of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), which causes psychoactive effects on the mind. This class of marijuana has the highest risk for pet toxicity.

Medical marijuana contains moderate to high levels of cannabidiol (CBD), a non-psychoactive cannabinoid compound, and lower levels of THC. These medicinal products may be prescribed to human patients for anti-nausea, pain relief and other medical reasons. Some of these products contain enough THC to produce toxicity in pets.

Cannabis that contains very low levels (less than 0.3 per cent) of THC in its flowers and leaves is classified as **hemp**. This tends to be most used for "medicinal" purposes for pets, with products including hemp oil, tincture or hemp powder. Effective and safe dosages of hemp products have not been studied.

CAN MY VETERINARIAN PRESCRIBE MARIJUANA PRODUCTS OR MEDICAL MARIJUANA TO MY PET?

No. Veterinarians are not allowed to prescribe any of these products to pets. In addition, there are currently no CBD products approved by Health Canada and therefore no legal pathway for veterinarians to obtain these products.

IS MARIJUANA SAFE FOR MY PET?

No. Studies shows that dogs have a higher sensitivity to cannabinoids than people. Given the insufficient research regarding dosage, frequency of administration and side effects, pet owners should not give their pets any type of marijuana product, as it could produce a life-threatening medical crisis.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK MY PET INGESTED MARIJUANA?

Take your pet to a veterinary hospital immediately. Don't be afraid to tell the veterinarian that your pet has accidentally ingested marijuana products—symptoms are varied and omitting this information can make diagnosing and managing your pet's case difficult. Remember, your veterinarian only has your pet's health in mind.



Your Source. Your Voice.



SIGNS OF MARIJUANA TOXICITY

- Lack of balance and coordination
- Fatigue or weakness
- Excessive salivation
- Vomiting
- Dilated pupils
- Tremours or seizures
- Disorientation
- Slow heart rate
- Change in body temperature
- Sensitivity to light and sound
- Urinary incontinence

With information from Health Canada, the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association and the American Veterinary Medical Association.