

CBD for Health

Broad Benefits, Narrow Risks

By Charlene Pierce

Have you noticed the new CBD shops opening throughout Omaha, Lincoln, and the state?

While these stores may be new, the lure of CBD is not. Health food stores and other companies have been selling CBD products in Nebraska for many years.

Cannabidiol (CBD) is a natural medicinal agent gaining traction as a potential treatment for various medical conditions. CBD has long been associated with pain management. Preliminary research has shown that CBD offsets anxiety and depression. It ameliorates PTSD symptoms and has been successfully used to treat opioid addiction. Patients with ALS and Parkinson's disease have found that CBD helps calm muscle spasms. Cancer and MS patients use CBD to alleviate pain. CBD can inhibit arthritis symptoms, protect against neurological disease, and ease complications from diabetes. The anti-seizure medication Epidiolex contains CBD and has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration to treat epilepsy.

Marijuana and hemp are both derived from the cannabis plant. The ingredient in marijuana that produces a "high" is tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). Hemp is defined as any part of the cannabis plant that contains less than 0.3 percent THC (a barely measurable trace amount that is not enough to produce a high). Hemp is currently

a legal product according to federal law, though some states list it as a controlled substance. State laws also determine who can grow, process, and sell hemp and hemp-based products. As a result, CBD and other hemp-derived products may not be legal in all states.

There are three types of CBD. Full-spectrum CBD is derived from non-hemp portions of the cannabis plant but will contain less than 0.3 percent THC. Broad-spectrum CBD is derived from hemp and non-hemp sections of the plant and does not contain any traces of THC. CBD isolate is the purest form, derived from hemp. All three types of CBD are available in various forms, including capsules, oils, topicals, edibles, and vape juices.

The potency of CBD varies by product and company, but there are three main levels: 300 mg, 600 mg, and 1,000 mg. The 300-mg level is half as strong as 600 mg; 1,000 mg is the most potent. However, the milligrams listed on the label refer to the entire bottle, not a dose. This is where many consumers need clarification when selecting CBD products. A package of 300-mg CBD gummies in a 15-mL bottle will be twice as potent as the 300-mg gummies in a 30-mL bottle. Staff mem-

bers at your local store should be happy to guide you to the potency that you want.

One of the reasons for CBD's popularity is its limited side effects. It is known to be very well tolerated, with dry mouth, drowsiness, reduced appetite, and diarrhea being the most common side effects. However, CBD can interfere with the effectiveness of certain medications. If you are taking medication, particularly blood thinners, you should consult your doctor before using CBD products.

Certain people should avoid using CBD. Pregnant and nursing women should be aware that there is insufficient research to determine whether CBD is transferred to the fetus or the baby through breast milk. CBD could negatively affect children whose brains are still developing; parents should immediately contact the poison control center for assistance if children consume CBD products without a doctor's recommendation.

The use of CBD products is becoming increasingly popular, but there is still a lack of regulation within the industry. With no governing body, the safety of CBD products cannot be guaranteed, and there is a potential for products to contain inaccurate labeling or less-than-pure CBD. Additionally, there is a risk that consumers might

inadvertently purchase THC-containing products if a business sells both CBD and THC products. Precautions must be taken when purchasing CBD products to ensure the safety and accuracy of the products.

One way a consumer can verify the safety of a CBD product is to check its COA (Certificate of Analysis). The COA is found by scanning the QR code on the product's label or website. It is a report from a verified laboratory that details the potency of the CBD product and whether it contains any pesticides, mold, or other harmful ingredients.

While the FDA doesn't regulate CBD products, they do issue warning letters to companies that make false claims about their products. All warning letters are public information. You can search the [FDA.gov](https://www.fda.gov) website for the company's name before you purchase its products.

While CBD's benefits are wide, it is still important to verify the product to ensure your safety and consult your doctor to ensure it doesn't adversely affect any of your other medications. **WE**

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