

Cannabidiol (CBD) - Topic of the Month

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What is Cannabidiol?

Cannabidiol (CBD) is a type of cannabinoid, one of many components of the cannabis plant. Cannabinoids are naturally occurring in numerous plants, as well as being produced in the human body. CBD is commonly known to produce a relaxing affect in the user. While CBD does not produce a “high”, there are serious risks associated with its use.

Products containing CBD are available to purchase over the counter for any person over the age of 18. CBD is currently illegal to be marketed as a food or dietary supplement in the US. Despite that fact, CBD is easily found online and in stores with attractive packaging promoting the product’s health benefits.

The *US Food and Drug Administration (FDA)* has approved only one prescription drug containing CBD.³ This medicine has been found to be safe and effective *for its intended use* in treatment of seizures associated with two rare conditions. The FDA has limited data about CBD but have identified some real risks to certain populations. Based on current lack of evidence, the FDA has not concluded that CBD is safe for use in human foods.

Unnoticed Adverse Effects of CBD

- Liver injury.
- Drug interactions, affecting metabolism of medications.
- CBD can increase the risk of side effects when taken with medication.
- Possible male reproductive toxicity.

Noticeable Adverse Effects of CBD

- Agitation, especially when combined with alcohol or other drugs.
- Gastrointestinal distress, including diarrhea or loss of appetite.
- Changes in mood, especially irritability and agitation.
- Lightheadedness or dizziness, caused by a decrease in blood pressure.

The FDA continues to study CBD, including the effect of cumulative exposure, specifically in the elderly, young children, adolescents, pregnant and lactating individuals.

WIC’s Role

WIC policy [Section 6.4](#) requires that staff inform participants of potential risks of using drugs or other substances. Client education is essential to improving the health and wellbeing of all WIC participants. In the case of CBD, education on this unregulated/unapproved product might dissuade some people from its use.

Talking Points

- Maternal smoking, inhaling, or consuming CBD or CBD-containing products while pregnant or breastfeeding, may expose the fetus/infant to unknown harm.¹
- CBD has been detected in the breastmilk of nursing parents who used CBD products.²
- Lack of product regulation increases the risk that products may contain heavy metals, pesticides, and other ingredients.⁴
- Using CBD products that are unregulated with unproven benefits can be harmful to one's health.³
- The perceived effects of using CBD products may lead users to delay seeking medical care.³

Resources:

1. [What You Should Know about Using Cannabis, Including CBD, When Pregnant or Breastfeeding](#) -FDA guidance on using THC or CBC while pregnant or breastfeeding. October 16, 2019
2. [Cannabidiol](#) - Drugs and lactation database (LactMed). February 7, 2019.
3. [FDA-What You Need to Know About CBD](#) - FDA answers questions about the science, safety, and quality of CBD products. November 25, 2019
4. [FDA warns 15 companies illegally marketing CBD as dietary supplements](#) - Violations include marketing food products containing the unapproved addition of CBD. November 25, 2019

Sample Scenario

Continue reading for a sample scenario demonstrating a conversation with a breastfeeding woman who shares interest in CBD to help her relax and relieve stress.

Skills and tools used in this scenario:

- [PCS Counseling Skills](#): When approaching the topic of CBD, use reflective listening and affirmations to let the participant know you are not judging them. Using PCS to evoke behavior change can be challenging, particularly when discussing supplements or medicinal products that have not been recommended by a medical professional.
- [WIC Baby Behavior](#) Tools: Baby Behavior tools are essential when educating new parents. Baby Behavior tools help parents learn to recognize their baby's cues.

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- [Asking Permission](#): Always ask for permission before you share concerns, information, or resources. By doing this, participants might be more likely to consider the information you provide.

Context: Sarah is visiting the clinic today to talk about the stress of managing new baby Olivia's feeding schedule and ensuring the milk supply is adequate. Sarah shares that it has been so stressful and is thinking of trying CBD supplements to reduce stress. Sarah read on the CBD package that it can help calm nerves and it comes in great flavors so will be easy to take.

CPA: Welcome back Sarah. Congratulations on your beautiful baby! I see that you named baby Olivia, what a pretty name! I understand you are breastfeeding and have a few questions about your milk supply.

Sarah: Hello. Yes, Olivia is my daughter's name. When I called to make the appointment, I told the person on the phone what was going on, but I guess I can start over again.

CPA: Oh, I understand it can be frustrating repeating yourself. It does look like the phone staff included a note that you are concerned with low milk supply because baby is eating so frequently. Would you be okay sharing with me, what a day of feeding looks like?

Sarah: Sure. Olivia is eating every one to two hours during the day. Sometimes she goes a little longer between feedings at night. I feel like she is eating well when she's at the breast, but still she wants more so soon and it's hard to get anything done.

CPA: Being a new mom is hard. It feels like you only have time to feed your baby and getting things done around the house fall to the side.

Sarah: Exactly. I have been so stressed-out watching dishes and laundry pile up. I get so little sleep; I feel like something has to change. Do you think I could try those CBD gummies? The package says it can help to relax you. But will it be safe when I am breastfeeding?

CPA: You are a great mom. I am happy to hear that the latching is going well, and it seems like baby is feeding well at the breast. Could I share some information about feeding baby as well as what I have learned about CBD?

Sarah: At this point, anything would be helpful.

CPA: Let's start with the feeding. Did staff share the baby behavior information with you at your pregnancy appointment?

Sarah: Oh, yeah. I remember watching a video on hunger cues. That has helped me to know when my baby is really truly hungry, and not crying for another reason. I like that I can look at the videos on the app on my phone too.

CPA: Great, you really prepared yourself for recognizing those feeding cues. I can tell you that frequent feeding in the beginning helps to establish your milk supply. Also, with Olivia's stomach being so small, she knows best when she is full, following her cues is one way to know she is feeding well.

Sarah: Huh, that makes sense. It is important to me that I breastfeed. I want my baby to be healthy. What about the CBD gummies, though? I am also worried about the stress I'm under.

CPA: First of all, I want to thank you for sharing your concerns with me. I can tell this is important to you. Let me share what I have learned about CBD. There was a recent study finding CBD in the breastmilk of moms who were taking the supplement. The FDA advises that pregnant and nursing women avoid using CBD.

Sarah: That's really scary! I would never do anything to put Olivia at risk. I guess CBD's not a good option for reducing my stress.

CPA: I believe you wouldn't. I'm so happy that you asked me about CBD today so I could share this valuable information with you! Could I make a suggestion for addressing your stress?

Sarah: Okay.

CPA: It sounds like what you're experiencing is quite normal for new moms. There are many support groups where you could share your frustrations and find other moms who understand what you're going through. However, if you feel that things are getting out of control, and you might be depressed, it may be time to contact your doctor.

Sarah: Thank you, you really have been helpful.

CPA: You're so welcome. I'm glad that I was able to answer some of your questions and I hope ease some of your stress! I encourage you to view more of the Baby Behavior videos as they may continue to be helpful as your baby grows. And again, contact your doctor if you feel like things are not getting better with your stress levels soon!

Be sure to summarize what was discussed at the end of the appointment and, most importantly, provide contact information for any referral mentioned.

References- Complete Listing of Hyperlinks

Section 6.4

(https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch6/sctn6_4.pdf)

What You Should Know about Using Cannabis, Including CBD, When Pregnant or Breastfeeding

(<https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/what-you-should-know-about-using-cannabis-including-cbd-when-pregnant-or-breastfeeding>)

Cannabidiol (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK535598/#LM1442.drug-levels-effects>)

FDA-What You Need to Know About CBD (<https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/what-you-need-know-and-what-were-working-find-out-about-products-containing-cannabis-or-cannabis>)

FDA warns 15 companies illegally marketing CBD as dietary supplements

(<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-warns-15-companies-illegally-selling-various-products-containing-cannabidiol-agency-details>)

PCS Counseling Skills

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/localagency/training/pcs/skills/counseling.html>)

WIC Baby Behavior (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/localagency/training/bb.html>)

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[Asking Permission: Ninth in a Nutrition Assessment Series](#)

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/wedupdate/2022/topic/0316na.pdf>)

Minnesota Department of Health - WIC Program 85 E 7th Place, PO BOX 64882, ST PAUL MN 55164-0882; 1-800-657-3942, health.wic@state.mn.us, www.health.state.mn.us; To obtain this information in a different format, call: 1-800-657-3942

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