CANNABIDIOL: MEDICINE FROM HEMP

The first CBD-containing drug was approved in the US in 2018. Here we examine what it's used to treat and whether the increasing number of CBD supplements are effective.

WHAT IS CANNABIDIOL?

Hemp plant flowers typically contain 5% CBD by dry weight.

Cannabidiol (CBD) is extracted from hemp plants. Hemp is a strain of cannabis plant that contains 0.3% or less of psychoactive ∆9-tetrahydrocannabinol.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

RECEPTORS THAT CBD MAY ACT ON

- GPR3
- GPR6
- TRPV1
- GPR12
- 5-HT1a

How CBD works isn't known. It doesn't bind to the same protein receptors as ∆9-THC. A possible target is G protein-coupled receptor 55, which boosts signals between brain cells.

MEDICINES AND SUPPLEMENTS

Epidiolex is the first drug containing CBD to be approved by the US Food and Drug Administration. It’s used to treat rare and severe forms of epilepsy.

EPI DIOLEX

100 mg of CBD per milliliter
Dose: Up to 600 mg per day

CBD SUPPLEMENTS

10-15 mg of CBD per capsule

Efficacy and Regulations

Epidiolex reduces seizures in over 40% of patients with Lennox-Gastaut or Dravet syndrome, types of epilepsy that manifest during early childhood.

POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS OF EPI DIOLEX

- Reduced appetite
- Sleepiness
- Liver damage
- Drug interactions

CBD-containing products were worth $190 million in the US in 2017. CBD supplements are technically illegal under US federal law, although the FDA is largely choosing not to enforce the law. State laws vary.

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