Access to medicinal cannabis in Victoria
Information for patients and carers

What is medicinal cannabis?
Medicinal cannabis is a pharmaceutical product prescribed by your doctor. It is used to treat the symptoms of a medical condition, or the side effects of another treatment.

You should talk to your doctor about whether medicinal cannabis may be appropriate for you.

What medicinal cannabis products are available?
Medicinal cannabis products vary in formulation (combination of different cannabinoids) and how they are taken (oils, gels, capsules etc.). Different products will be appropriate for the treatment of different symptoms or conditions. Your doctor will determine which medicinal cannabis product is right for you.

Most products available in Australia have not been evaluated by the Therapeutic Goods Administration and entered onto the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG) - the usual process for medicines in Australia. One product is listed on the ARTG.

How can I access medicinal cannabis?
Legal medicinal cannabis products can only be accessed via a prescription from your doctor.

Step 1
Speak with your doctor to determine whether medicinal cannabis is an appropriate treatment for you. If so, your doctor will then decide which product is most suitable. The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has developed [clinical guidance documents](#) to help support doctors and patients with this decision.

Step 2
Your doctor may need to apply for government approval before prescribing medicinal cannabis to you. If required, this process takes 2 business days after all the required information is submitted.

Step 3
Once your doctor has any required approvals, they will give you a prescription that you can have dispensed at any pharmacy.

How much does medicinal cannabis cost?
The cost of medicinal cannabis products is not currently subsidised by the Commonwealth Government’s Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). This means that you will need to fund the cost of treatment yourself.

The amount you will pay varies depending on the type of product prescribed and the dose recommended by your doctor.

Can I drive while taking medicinal cannabis?
Medicinal cannabis products containing THC can cause impairment, and therefore patients should not drive or operate heavy machinery while taking this medicine. In addition, it is an offence to drive with any amount of THC in your system in Victoria and this may be detected for a number of days after consumption.

Patients should also note that medicinal cannabis may be detected in occupational/organisational drug testing programs.
Figure 1: How to access medicinal cannabis

The first step is to discuss medicinal cannabis with your doctor, and whether a medicinal cannabis product is right for you.

If your doctor believes medicinal cannabis is appropriate, they will need to:
- identify a medicinal cannabis product
- make appropriate applications for approval to prescribe it to you.

Useful links

Office of Medicinal Cannabis Victoria

Better Health Channel

Therapeutic Goods Administration – Medicinal cannabis

Office of Drug Control

To receive this publication in an accessible format phone (03) 9096 7768 using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or email medicinal.cannabis@dhhs.vic.gov.au.

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