

# Things to Consider About Cannabis-based Treatments:



## The Importance of Growing Conditions<sup>1</sup>

Cannabis plants absorb chemicals from the soil. Growing plants outdoors may seem natural. However, research has shown that ground soil can contain toxins such as pesticides, heavy metals, or fertilizers. Additionally, the light/dark cycle affects the expression of cannabinoids.

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## The Production Process<sup>2</sup>

Testing standards and labeling vary greatly from state to state and among manufacturers. The variety of cannabis plants used, growing conditions, and the way cannabinoids are extracted can have a big impact on the ingredients, consistency, and stability of products.

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## Product Ingredients<sup>2</sup>

Most cannabis-based dispensary products are plant extracts or mixtures of different cannabinoids including THC. Many of these compounds, available without a prescription, are unknown or understudied. The actual content of THC and/or CBD may be uncertain or unreliable.

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## Inspection and Regulations<sup>1</sup>

Look for manufacturers who meet the World Health Organization's Good Agricultural Practices and are certified by an accepted certification body.

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## Clinical Trial Results<sup>3</sup>

Every patient's safety is important. An FDA-approved product means that the medication has been studied in large patient populations and is being monitored for long-term safety. Data from these controlled clinical trials help evaluate safety, effectiveness, and appropriate dosing.

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## Consistency From Batch to Batch<sup>4</sup>

For medical treatment, it's important to keep a consistent dose from batch to batch. The product should be labeled with a batch number, expiration date, and serial number to ensure identification and the ability to track each bottle.

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# Thinking about a cannabinoid or cannabis-based treatment for your child or loved one?

## Here are some questions you may want to ask your doctor:

1. Are current medications working?
2. Are current medications causing side effects?
3. Is a cannabis-based product an option?
4. What is the difference between CBD (cannabidiol) and THC (tetrahydrocannabinol)?
5. Do you know which cannabinoids are in the product you are considering?  
 CBD     THC     Other  
 I don't know
6. What dose is appropriate for my child/loved one? Are there clinical data to support this dose?
7. Has the product been tested for safety and effectiveness at this dose?
8. Is the cannabinoid product approved by the FDA or other regulatory authority?
9. Who manufactures this product and why does that matter?  
 Pharmaceutical company  
 Dispensary  
 Private grower  
 Unknown
10. Will insurance cover this treatment?
11. Has the product been tested by a properly certified laboratory to ensure it is free from the following contaminants?  
 Mold  
 Environmental toxins  
 Heavy metals  
 Dioxins  
 Pesticides

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### References:

1. WHO Guidelines on Good Agricultural and Collection Practices (GACP) for Medicinal Plants. World Health Organization Geneva. 2003. <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/42783/9241546271.pdf;jsessionid=18649F63A712AB09451558151CE91CE9?sequence=1>. Accessed January 23, 2018. 2. *Guidance for State Medical Cannabis Testing Programs*. Association of Public Health Laboratories. Silver Springs, MD. May 2016. <https://www.aphl.org/aboutAPHL/publications/Documents/EH-Guide-State-Med-Cannabis-052016.pdf>. Accessed January 23, 2018. 3. What we do. US Food & Drug Administration website. <https://www.fda.gov/aboutfda/whatwedo/>. Accessed January 23, 2018. 4. *CFR - Code of Federal Regulations Title 21*. US Food & Drug Administration website. <https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cdrh/cfdocs/cfcfr/CFRSearch.cfm?fr=210.3>. Accessed January 23, 2018.

