

PATIENT HANDBOOK



VTPATIENTSAlliance

Vermont Patients Alliance, Inc. (VPA) does not give medical advice. VPA does not make any claims regarding the safety or efficacy of Cannabis due to the lack of substantial evidence or substantial clinical data with reasonable scientific rigor. The information provided in this document is based on information reported by patients and other sources and should not be construed as claiming the safety or efficacy of Cannabis. This handbook and other materials distributed by VPA are informational only and not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.

CONTENTS

Welcome to Vermont Patient's Alliance	2
Becoming a Patient.....	4
VPA Services	5
Using Cannabis-Based Medicine.....	6
Our Products	11
Information for Patients	13
Additional Resources	13



WELCOME TO VERMONT PATIENT'S ALLIANCE

Mission

Our mission at Vermont Patients Alliance is to provide high-quality, safe, and organic cannabis-based medicine; to assist and support people suffering from medical conditions; and to expand knowledge about Cannabis and other plant-based products through research, education of patients and their caregivers, and the general public.

About Us

Vermont Patients Alliance was created by a group of physicians, nurses, scientists, and local business leaders in 2013. The goal was simple: provide high-quality products and services to patients suffering from debilitating medical conditions. VPA was granted the first medical marijuana dispensary license in Montpelier and opened its doors to patients in June, 2013. Since then, VPA has remained committed to the support and care of patients through education, research, and socially and environmentally responsible business practices. As the program has expanded and evolved over time, our dedication to these core beliefs remains at the forefront of everything we do.



Our Dispensary

Our dispensaries are a safe and comfortable place for patients to access premium quality cannabis products. Patients consult one-on-one with knowledgeable dispensary staff to develop individualized plans for product administration. All products are tested for potency and safety to ensure their high quality.

What drives us is the passion...to understand this plant better and how we can use it to help people lead better lives.

Vermont Patients Alliance operates under Title 18 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated, Chapter 86, Subchapter 2: "Marijuana for Medical Symptom Use by Persons with Severe Illness."



Staff & Resources

Our staff includes certified herbalists who can guide you in choosing products that are best suited for your needs. Your dispenser will answer any questions you have about our products and support you in meeting your individual health goals.



Sustainable Cultivation

We use 100% organic soil-based cultivation methods and locally sourced materials. We rely on companion planting, intercropping, and Integrative Pest Management rather than synthetic chemicals and pesticides. We offer both indoor grown products and products produced under natural light.



Research & Development

At VPA we take a scientific, evidenced-based approach to growing and dispensing Cannabis. Part of our continuing mission and vision is to expand the scientific knowledge about Cannabis and other plant-based medicines.

BECOMING A PATIENT AT VPA

To get ready for your first visit to the dispensary, there are a few steps you need to take:

1. Visit your health care provider

Your provider will complete the Health Care Professional Verification form to certify you have a “debilitating medical condition.”

The State of Vermont requires you to be a patient of your provider for a minimum of 90 days before they can provide medical verification.

2. Register as a patient with the State

Complete the Registered Patient Application and list VPA as your dispensary. Mail your completed forms to DPS with the annual fee of \$50.

E-mail a digital photo of yourself to DPS.MJRegistry@Vermont.gov. Put your full name in the subject line and your name and date of birth in the body of the e-mail.

3. Schedule an Appointment at VPA

When you’ve received your Marijuana Registry Card in the mail, call VPA to schedule an appointment. Make sure to have your patient number from your card when you call. Your first appointment will take around 30 minutes.

4. Visit your dispensary

When you come for your appointment you are required to bring your VMR card and a second form of valid, photo ID

Your dispenser will review our patient intake forms and dispensary policies with you. Please take this time to ask any questions you may have. We look forward to meeting you!

VPA SERVICES

VPA is vertically-integrated, which means we cultivate, manufacture, test and dispense all Cannabis in-house.

Our services include:

Patient Consultations

We have two dispensing rooms available for private consultations. State rules require patients to schedule appointments in advance. New patients should call to schedule a 30-minute intake appointment. Existing patients can use our online scheduler which is available upon request. Return visits typically require 10 minutes but if you feel you need more time, please be sure to call and request a longer one-on-one discussion with your dispenser.

Please Note:
State law
requires that
patients schedule
appointments in
advance.

Translation and Interpretation Services

At VPA, we are committed to serving our patients, in any language. Deaf/hard of hearing translation services are available, as well as accommodations for the blind/visually impaired. Please contact us for more information.

Home Delivery

We offer a state-wide delivery service for registered patients and caregivers. Please contact the dispensary for your county's delivery schedule.

Clones, Seeds, and Consultations

Clones and seeds are available for registered patients who have designated VPA as their dispensary. We offer a variety of different strains, subject to availability. Your dispenser can advise you on the best strain to target your individual symptoms. We can also provide cultivation consultations, upon request, to assist you in growing and maintaining your plants at home. Please contact the dispensary for a list of current strains available for pick-up.

Testing

Our products are batch tested for cannabinoid potency by our affiliate lab, Nutraceutical Science Laboratories (NSL). We strongly believe that patients need to know what is inside

Vermont Patients Alliance (VPA) does not give medical advice. VPA does not make any claims regarding the safety or efficacy of cannabis due to the lack of substantial evidence or substantial clinical data with reasonable scientific rigor. The information provided in this document is based on information reported by patients and other sources and should not be construed as claiming the safety or efficacy of cannabis. This handbook and other materials distributed by VPA are informational and are not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.

USING CANNABIS-BASED MEDICINE

Cannabis and the Endocannabinoid System

The endogenous cannabinoid system (ECS), named after the plant that led to its discovery, plays a vital role in sustaining human health. Endocannabinoids, a type of neurotransmitter, and their receptors are located throughout the body including the brain, connective tissues, and glands. They regulate a variety of processes including pregnancy, mood, pain sensation, and memory.

Endocannabinoid System

Endocannabinoid receptors are activated by both endocannabinoids and phytocannabinoids. Endocannabinoids are produced naturally by the human body (i.e. anandamide and 2-arachidonoylglycerol). Phytocannabinoids are produced naturally by the cannabis plant (i.e. THC and CBD). Researchers have identified two main endocannabinoid receptors: CB1, and CB2¹.



CB1 receptors are predominantly found in the nervous system, connective tissues, gonads, glands, and organs.



CB2 receptors are predominantly found in the immune system and its associated structures.

Phytocannabinoids

There are over 500 chemical components found within the Cannabis plant. Over 60 of them have been classified as “cannabinoids,” and are unique to the Cannabis plant. The two main biologically active cannabinoids are tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD). THC, CBD, and other Cannabis compounds are believed to interact synergistically to create an “entourage” or “ensemble” effect. In other words, it is believed that the impact of the whole plant is greater than the sum of its parts. The percentage of each cannabinoid, or cannabinoid profile varies from plant to plant and from strain to strain².



THC is the most common phytocannabinoid in Cannabis and known for being a psychoactive component (producing an effect commonly known as a “high”). THC has been reported to reduce pain and inflammation, provide relief from nausea and spasmodic activities, and has neuroprotective properties.



CBD is also psychoactive but does not produce a “high” effect. CBD has been reported to have anti-convulsive, anti-inflammatory, and anti-tumor properties.

WHAT MEDICINE IS RIGHT FOR ME?

There is a lot to consider when deciding what Cannabis medicine is right for you. A number of factors impact the effects each individual feels including an individual's genetics, condition, tolerance, environment, and product selection.

At VPA, we carry a variety of medical Cannabis products. We recognize that it can be challenging to know where to start. Each

person metabolizes, processes, and experiences Cannabis differently – so it is difficult to know what will work best. At the beginning, it's a trial and error process. After a few experiences, you will begin to identify your tolerances and preferences: daytime vs. nighttime relief, method of consumption, effects, experiences, and the duration of the effects of the medicine.

Modes of Administration

VPA's Cannabis medications may be administered through a variety of means including inhalation, oral ingestion, absorption through membranes, and topical (transdermal) methods. The major differences between the various methods of administration are the onset of action (duration of relief) and the bioavailability (amount that is active after taking the medicine).

Inhalation

Inhalation is the most common form of administration. Cannabis can be inhaled through either vaporization or combustion (smoking). Inhaling Cannabis provides a rapid effect, but relatively short duration – anywhere from 90 minutes to several hours.

Vaporization

Vaporization produces fewer carcinogens and gives a more potent dose. During vaporization, the cannabinoids are heated to a temperature that is sufficient to produce airborne vapors without burning the plant material. Vaporizers can be used with dried flower, concentrates or come as pre-filled cartridges.

Ingestion

Ingestion or consumption of Cannabis through the form of a food product, capsule, or oil. The onset of action can be delayed for up to 2 hours after taking the product. Despite the delay, the effects usually last much longer than with inhalation. Patients should start with the smallest dose possible and wait at least 2 hours before increasing the dose.

Topical/Transdermal

With topical application, cannabinoids are absorbed through the skin. Products include creams, salves, lip balms and transdermal patches.

Dosage Recommendations

General Guidelines

- Read the label! VPA's labels clearly state the amount of milligrams (mg) of cannabinoids per serving, as well as per package.
- Track your results: Use your Tracking Sheet provided by VPA to record the dosage, time of consumption, time of onset, and duration for each medicinal product.
- Absorbed in the stomach vs. in the mouth: When using products absorbed through the gastro-intestinal tract, it can take up to two hours to feel an effect and the effect may last up to 8+ hours. When consuming edibles that are held in your mouth (lozenges, tinctures, breath sprays), the effects can be felt more quickly and may last between 2-3 hours.

Rule of Thumb

Start low
and go slow.

Inhalation

- A typical starting dose is 5-10mg THC per 100kg (~220lbs) body weight.
- A joint that contains 0.8g of Cannabis and has 10% THC by weight will contain about 80mg THC, or 8-16 doses.
- We suggest trying an inhalation and waiting 10-15 minutes before increasing your dose.
- Repeat use as needed.
- Onset of action is seconds to minutes and effect lasts 30-90 minutes.

Ingestion

- A typical starting dose is 5-10mg of THC or less
- Wait at least two hours before having any more: "Start low and go slow." It's important to start at a low dosage and not increase the dosage until you have monitored your response and its effects.
- Remember that a high tolerance for inhalation does not equate to a high tolerance for oral administration.
- Understand duration: onset of action is 30-120 minutes and can last 1-8+ hours.
- Keep edibles in original, childproof packaging away from children.
- Avoid ingesting products on an empty stomach, eating a full meal before ingesting helps to lower the intensity of the effects.

New Consumers 1-5mg THC	Occasional Consumers 5-10mg THC	Frequent Consumers 10-15mg THC
If it's your first time eating edibles, start with a low dose. It is important to make sure your body can digest Cannabis comfortably.	A 10mg dose is considered a single serving. Eating more than 10mg is not typically recommended.	A dose greater than 10mg is appropriate only for those with a high edible tolerance or patients with severe and chronic pain.

What variety is best for me?

Strains are generally categorized as sativa, hybrid, indica or CBD. However, each strain is unique and has its own chemical characteristics. Some strains may offer uniquely targeted relief for symptoms that might not be consistent for all patients. Although there are no scientific criteria for classifying products as sativa or indica, we understand some patients have become comfortable with this system.

Utilizing patient feedback at VPA, we have developed a categories for our products (using the lay names indica, sativa, or a mixing of the two called hybrid). Additionally we have certain products that have higher levels of CBD than THC, and we call these products High CBD.

All varieties of Cannabis may produce a sense of well-being, relieve pain, and reduce stress in addition to the following effects:

Sativa

Uplifting & energizing
Recommended for daytime use
Increased focus
Increased appetite

Indica

Relaxes muscles & reduces spasms
Promotes sleep
Relieves nausea

High CBD

Antispasmodic
Anti-inflammatory
Reduces seizures
No associated "high" effect



Safety & Responsibility

Responsible Use

Cannabis may cause impaired motor skills and drowsiness. Vermont law (18 V.S.A § 4474c) prohibits being under the influence of marijuana while operating a motor vehicle, boat or vessel. It also prohibits use in a workplace or place of employment or while operating heavy machinery. It is prohibited to smoke marijuana in a public place. It is also prohibited to resell or distribute marijuana purchased from the dispensary.

Tolerance, Dependence & Withdrawal

Like many other drugs of abuse, Cannabis does produce tolerance. In other words, with continued use, it may take more of the drug to have the same effect. Cannabis has the potential for producing psychological dependence which is possible with the overuse or abuse of any substance. People at highest risk for dependence often experience other risk factors (poor academic achievement, deviant behavior, poor parental relationships, or family history of drug and alcohol problems³. Cannabis has few reported withdrawal effects.

Potential Side Effects

Adverse events are dose related, meaning the potency and quantity consumed may have an impact on potential side-effects. Most common short-term side effects include: dizziness, dry mouth, euphoria, disorientation, drowsiness, anxiety, confusion, and paranoia. There is no high quality, randomized studies evaluating the long-term adverse events associated with cannabinoids⁴. Some studies suggest early and persistent use of cannabis can lead to adverse psychosocial outcomes.

Signs of Abuse

Like most other drugs of abuse, individuals who use Cannabis for long periods of time may develop a dependence on it. Signs of abuse include the need to use Cannabis to cope with everyday tasks and experience the cravings and anxiety when Cannabis is not available.

Storage

Cannabis-infused products have differing shelf lives depending on their preparation methods, ingredients, intended use, and the way in which they are stored. All cannabinoids will degrade under extreme conditions involving exposure to heat, light, or oxygen.

Temperature:

When it comes to storing cannabis infusions, keeping them refrigerated will extend shelf life. For longer-term storage, you can increase the shelf life of edibles by freezing them. Refer to the instructions on the product label for specific recommendations.

Humidity:

When storing dried flower, look for someplace where the humidity level does not fluctuate.

Light exposure:

When storing any Cannabis product, avoid exposure to light and oxygen. For long-term storage of a product, we recommend dark glass in a cool, dark place.

KEEP AWAY FROM CHILDREN

Cannabis can cause harm to children and should be stored in its original childproof packaging provided by VPA and kept in a locked container to avoid accidental ingestion by anyone. Do not store edible Cannabis products outside of their childproof packaging or with other foods.

OUR PRODUCTS

At VPA, we offer a wide variety of medical Cannabis products. It can be overwhelming to decide what option is best for you. Below is a brief list to aid you in your selection. During your visit to our dispensary, we encourage you to consult with our knowledgeable team of dispensers. They can guide you in selecting products that will be most appropriate for your symptoms. To view our current menu and pricing you can visit our online dispensary at www.vtpai.org.



Cured Flower

At VPA we carry a wide variety of strains. Strain availability is based upon a constant harvest cycle and rotate on a weekly basis. Flower is sold to patients in grams or ounces. On the right, you'll find a conversion chart to help you understand the weight of your purchase. Our strain selection menu is provided in our weekly newsletter or is available upon request.

Ounces (oz.)	Grams (g)
1/16	1.75
1/8	3.50
1/4	7
1/2	14
1	28



Vape Cartridges

The Cannabis oil in our vape cartridges is extracted using a process called Supercritical Fluid Extraction. SFE is an efficient, non-toxic extraction method that utilizes carbon dioxide. Sativa, Indica, Hybrid, and High CBD cartridges are available. Our cartridges do not contain Propylene Glycol,



Topicals / Transdermal

A topical is any item that is applied on the skin. At VPA we make salves, creams and lip balms, all of which are non-psychoactive. Our patients have reported these products ease pain, muscle soreness, inflammation, and soothe various skin conditions. We also offer transdermal options from Mary's Medicinals, including Transdermal Patches and Gel Pens.



Concentrates

Concentrates are made by separating and concentrating the cannabinoids from the plant to produce a more potent product. VPA's extractions are created using the following methods: ice water, heat press, organic ethanol, or CO2 extraction. We offer both strain blends and strain-specific concentrates.



Tinctures & Tonics

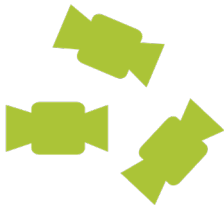
Our certified herbalists have created several Cannabis-based traditional and custom herbal formulas. Our tinctures consist of Cannabis extracted using organic ethanol and other herbs to provide a specific effect. Some of the herbal blend products we offer are:

- Elderberry Syrup (seasonal)
- Fire Cider (seasonal)
- Pain Relief Tincture
- Restful Night Tincture
- Sativa, Indica and CBD Glycerin Tinctures
- Sublingual Peppermint Breath Spray
- Mushroom Tonic (seasonal)



Capsules

VPA's capsules are made with our CO2 oil, a highly concentrated extract, and coconut oil. All capsules are vegetarian and sold in packs of three. We offer both THC and CBD capsules.



Cannabis-Infused Products

Food products that are infused with Cannabis are referred to as Cannabis-Infused Products or edibles. Please consult your dispenser if you have any specific dietary limitations. We are constantly developing new products to meet our patients' needs. Some of the products we carry are:

- Brownies
- Cheddar Bakes
- Chocolate Chip Cookies
- Herbal Bliss Balls
- Honey
- Lozenges



Suppositories

We offer suppositories that are made in house using CO2 oil, a highly concentrated, cannabis extract, mixed with coconut oil. They are available in both a high THC and a high CBD form.

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Financial Hardship Program

Patients may be eligible for a 10% price reduction if they are enrolled in the following programs: Medicaid, Medicare, 3SquaresVT, SSI, Unemployment or Veteran Affairs/Benefits. Patients must provide documentation of the program in which they are enrolled.

Vermont Marijuana Registry

Annual Renewal: Registered patients may apply to renew their registry identification card with the Vermont Marijuana Registry (VMR) by submitting a completed Department-approved application at least 30 days before the expiration date. It is the patient's responsibility to renew their card in time.

Caregivers

A registered caregiver is a person who is at least 21 years of age, who has met eligibility requirements determined by the VMR, and who has agreed to undertake responsibility for managing the well-being of a registered patient. Only registered patients and caregivers are permitted to enter the dispensing rooms. Caregivers are recommended for anyone who may require assistance conducting their appointment on their own.

Change of Information

At any point that there is a change to the patient's information such as change in name, designated dispensary, cultivation site or change in address they must notify the VMR and fill out a change form.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Americans for Safe Access — <http://safeaccessnow.org>

Cannabis Commons — <http://thecannabiscommons.com>

Healer — <https://healer.com/>

Leafly — <https://www.leafly.com>

Marijuana Policy Project — <https://www.mpp.org>

NORML — <http://norml.org/>

Patients Out of Time — <http://www.medicalcannabis.com/>

Project CBD — <http://projectcbd.org>

United Patients Group — <http://www.unitedpatientsgroup.com>

UVM Cannabis Science and Medicine — <https://learn.uvm.edu/program/cannabis-science-and-medicine-continuing-medical-education-cme/>

Vermont Marijuana Registry — <http://medicalmarijuana.vermont.gov/>

WE VALUE PATIENT FEEDBACK.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with questions, concerns or suggestions.



802-225-6786



info@vpavt.com



188 River Street
Montpelier, VT 05602

References

1. Sulak, D. (2016, February 25) The Endocannabinoid System. Retrieved March 12, 2018, from www.healer.com
2. Pacher, P., Batkai S., Kunos, G. 2006. The Endocannabinoid System as an Emerging Target of Pharmacotherapy. *Pharmacological Reviews*; 58(3): 389-462.
3. Stinson FS, Ruan WJ, Pickering R, Grant BF. Cannabis use disorders in the USA: prevalence, correlates and comorbidity. *Psychol Med*. 2006 Oct; 36(10):1447-60.
4. Whiting PF et al. Cannabinoids for Medical Review: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. *JAMA*. 2015; 313 (24):2456-2473. Doc10.1001/jama.2015.6358

Vermont Patients Alliance (VPA) does not give medical advice. VPA does not make any claims regarding the safety or efficacy of cannabis due to the lack of substantial evidence or substantial clinical data with reasonable scientific rigor. The information provided in this document is based on information reported by patients and other sources and should not be construed as claiming the safety or efficacy of cannabis. This handbook and other materials distributed by VPA are informational and are not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.