

# MEDICAL CANNABIS PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET

## THE ACCESS PROCESS

Register at reception, by phone or book online and we will phone you to establish your eligibility under the regulations and assist you to get a referral from your existing doctor.

When the above steps have been completed, we can book a telehealth appointment for you. At the time of your appointment, the doctor will call you on a private number. Please don't turn up to the clinic. Your prescription will be delivered to our pharmacy who will contact you by phone.

## TALK TO YOUR GP

The first thing you will need to do is talk to your regular GP about using Medical Cannabis as a treatment. If the condition is new, your GP is likely to recommend that you try other conventional treatments first. Before prescribing Medicinal Cannabis, the doctor will assess each patient to decide if the treatment is appropriate for their condition and individual circumstances. The doctor will also consider the patient's current medications and any other things that may interact with Medicinal Cannabis prescription.

## CONSENT

You will need to give informed consent and sign that you will not drive a vehicle or operate heavy machinery if the medicinal cannabis contains Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).

## COST

The cost depends on the cannabinoids in the product; the amount required by the patient; the source; shipping expenses; custom and dispensing fees, approximately \$5 - \$10 per day.

## PBS

Medicinal Cannabis is not on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) so patients need to pay the costs of purchasing the product. Currently there is no government subsidy nor does the government regulate the prices for supply of approved products.

## HEALTH FUNDS

Some patients have been refunded for the cost of the medicine on their health fund. Please check with your own health fund.



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## COST OF MEDICINAL CANNABIS CONSULTS

Your initial medical cannabis consultation can take up to an hour to complete the paperwork. Your doctor may charge \$150 - \$400 for this consultation. Subsequent consultations are \$75 private. You will need to have follow-up consultations with your doctor monthly.

<b>NEW PATIENTS</b>		
Initial consultation fee	\$250	covers up to 3 prescriptions
Follow up consultation fee	\$125	
Repeat prescription	\$50 for 1 \$75 for 2	(please book follow up appt if you require more than 2)
<b>EXISTING PATIENTS</b>		
Their current follow up fee will remain the same	\$75	
<b>ELIGIBLE PATIENTS WHO ARE CROSS REFERRED FROM OTHER DOCTORS</b>		
Initial consultation fee	\$200	Medicare rebate up to 3 prescriptions
Follow up consultation fee	\$100	Medicare rebate eligible

## HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR CONSULTATION

Before your consultation, it is a good idea to research THC and CBD so that you are familiar with the effects and possible side effects of these cannabinoids (cannabis components). Bringing your health summary is optional but not essential.

## PRODUCTS

Medical Cannabis comes in a variety of forms with varying combinations of cannabinoids (ie THC / CBD):

Flower/bud	Oils	Liquid Capsules	Oro-mucosal spray	Gels/creams
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These can be administered orally; spray, oils, capsules or tablets, inhaled via vaporisation (using a vaporiser approved by the TGA as a medical device or sourced by the patient), or via the skin; topical gel or topical cream.

## MEDICINAL CANNABIS DOSING

There are 2 types of dosing; regular dosing for control of a consistent symptom / condition and as required dosing for an intermittent symptom / condition. In both cases, patients should try to use the minimal effective dose. This is achieved by starting at a low dose as instructed by your doctor, and gradually increasing your dose until you either:

- have symptom / condition relief;
- you have a side effect or
- you reach the maximum dose prescribed by your doctor.



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If a side effect occurs, please contact your prescribing doctor and decrease the next dose. Most regular dosing is divided into twice daily intervals, but some patients find more regular intervals i.e. 4 times per day, better at controlling their symptom / condition. An example for a slowly increasing dose with an oil dropper would be 1 drop twice a day, increased by 1 drop every second day, to a maximum of 10 drops twice a day. This is a titrating dose.

## DRIVING

THC is the main psychoactive component of some cannabis. Some Medicinal Cannabis products have no THC and thus are non-psychoactive. Research has shown that THC use has an effect on a person's ability to drive. Unlike alcohol, there is currently no specific concentration of THC that authorities can use as an indicator of impairment. It is illegal for any patient being treated with medicinal cannabis containing THC to drive while undergoing treatment.

## CBD AND THC

Cannabinoids are naturally occurring compounds found in the Cannabis plant. Of over 480 different compounds present in the plant, only around 66 are termed cannabinoids. The cannabinoids are most abundant in the female flower head which is used in the manufacture of medicinal cannabis products. The most well-known among these compounds is THC, the main psychoactive ingredient in cannabis.

The main cannabinoids in cannabis are THC and CBD. THC is the most well-known due to its psychoactive properties and therefore its prevalence within the black market which has been specifically cultivated to get its user 'high'. THC may also be responsible for some of the medicinal effects of cannabis, such as reduction of nausea, vomiting, pain, and muscle spasms as well as improvements in sleep and appetite.

CBD has been found to reduce the 'high' and may be effective for seizures, pain and may also reduce anxiety. CBD causes no 'high' feeling and patients can drive when using CBD.

Different cannabis strains contain different ratios of THC to CBD. Medicinal Cannabis with THC is considered a controlled drug under Schedule 8 (S8) of the Poisons Standard. From 1 June 2015, CBD has been included under Schedule 4 (S4) Prescriptions Only Medicine of the Poisons Standard when preparations for therapeutic use contain 2% or less of other cannabinoids found in cannabis.

### **This document is a guide only**

If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak with your prescribing doctor.

