

CBD for Insomnia: Benefits, Side Effects, and Treatment



Medically reviewed by [Alan Carter, PharmD](#) on August 1, 2019 — Written by Sian Ferguson

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Design by Alexis Lira

CBD may help you sleep

Cannabidiol — also known as [CBD](#) — is one of the main cannabinoids in the cannabis plant. Cannabinoids interact with your [endocannabinoid system](#), which helps your body maintain a state of balance and stability, or homeostasis.

[Unlike tetrahydrocannabinol \(THC\)](#), CBD isn't psychoactive, meaning it won't get you "high." Instead, it has a range of health applications, like reducing seizures in people with epilepsy and [pain relief from various conditions](#).

Some research and anecdotal evidence suggest that CBD can also help you get a good night's sleep. Here's what you need to know about using CBD for sleep.

What the research says about CBD and sleep

To understand whether CBD can improve sleep, we first have to understand what causes poor sleep.

Many things can cause you to sleep badly. According to the [Mayo Clinic](#), [insomnia](#) can be caused by:

- mental health disorders, such as [anxiety](#), post-traumatic stress disorder ([PTSD](#)), and [depression](#)
- medication, which can disturb your sleep-wake cycle
- physical conditions, such as chronic pain and restless leg syndrome
- caffeine, especially when consumed late in the day
- environmental factors, such as loud noises or an uncomfortable bed

If your insomnia is caused by external factors or related conditions, CBD may help by treating the causes of sleeplessness.

While research on CBD is still in its infancy, some research suggests that [CBD can treat anxiety](#).

[Research](#) published in 2019 looked at whether CBD could improve sleep and/or reduce anxiety. The study involved 72 subjects, with 47 experiencing anxiety and 25 experiencing poor sleep. The subjects were each given 25 milligrams (mg) of CBD in capsule form each day. In the first month, 79.2 percent of the patients reported lower anxiety levels and 66.7 percent reported better sleep.

Pain, which may also cause sleep problems, can be helped by CBD as well. A [2018 review](#) in *Frontiers in Pharmacology* noted that there's a fair amount of evidence to support the claim that CBD soothes pain. The authors note that by reducing chronic pain, CBD can improve sleep.

Other research tells us that CBD affects the sleep cycle. [Research from 2014](#) looked at four patients with Parkinson's disease. It found that CBD improved the symptoms of REM sleep behavior disorder (RBD), a disorder in which a person acts out their dreams. RBD is associated with poor sleep and nightmares.

A [2017 review](#) also noted that CBD may be helpful in treating RBD, and that it shows potential for treating excessive daytime sleepiness.

Grogginess, another symptom of insomnia, might also be affected by CBD. A [2014 review](#) found that CBD could have the potential to promote wakefulness, based on both human and animal research. The authors noted they weren't sure exactly how or why CBD promoted wakefulness in some instances.

CBD may help treat:

- the causes of sleepiness
- excessive daytime sleepiness
- grogginess

How CBD works to improve sleep

Even studies that conclude that CBD can improve sleep aren't always able to say why this is the case. Most of the above-mentioned studies emphasize that we need more research on CBD before we fully understand how it affects our sleep.

However, as mentioned above, many researchers say that CBD improves sleep because it tackles the root causes of insomnia.

As more research is done on CBD, we'll learn more about why and how it can help us sleep.

How to use CBD for sleep

There are a number of [ways to take CBD](#). It comes in a few different forms, including:

- vape concentrates
- oils and tinctures
- pills and capsules
- edibles, like gummies

Generally, vaping CBD gets it into your system faster than other forms. However, there's not much research on vaping CBD, and [vaping](#) in general may pose respiratory risks.

The dosage of CBD you use, and the time you take it, will depend on a number of factors. Your weight, personal body chemistry, and the nature of your sleeping troubles will affect how the CBD works. What works for some people might not work for others.

Most clinical trials on CBD and sleep have involved giving the subjects anywhere between 25 mg to 1,500 mg of CBD per day. It's best to start with a low [dosage](#) and gradually increase it until you find something that works for you.

Much of the research on CBD, anxiety, and sleep has noted that many patients don't notice an immediate difference. The 2019 study mentioned above noted that it took about a month for the subjects to notice a difference. Be patient, and remember that you're unlikely to get immediate results.

Side effects and safety concerns of CBD

A [2017 review](#) looked at multiple studies on the safety of CBD and concluded that it's a relatively safe treatment.

Side effects are relatively uncommon. However, you may experience some minor side effects.

Possible side effects

- fatigue
- diarrhea
- changes in appetite
- changes in weight

Though CBD is generally regarded as safe, a [2019 study](#) done on mice did raise concerns about CBD's potential for liver damage. CBD may also interact with other medications you're taking, so speak to your doctor before using it.

Remember to use high-quality CBD products. Unfortunately, CBD isn't regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). As a result, there are some weak and possibly dangerous products out there that are labeled as "CBD."

Before you buy CBD from a company, research their history. Avoid companies with a history of mislabeling CBD, and opt for CBD that has been tested by a third party.

According to the [Mayo Clinic](#), doctors seldom recommend using sleep medication for longer than a few weeks. While CBD and other medication can be helpful, it's important to get to the root cause of your sleep problems.

You may need a physical examination, to change your sleep habits, or to change your medication. Talk to your doctor if you have trouble sleeping.

Talk to your doctor before trying CBD

It's essential to talk to your doctor before taking supplements or medication of any kind — including CBD. A doctor is best equipped to tell you how to use CBD to improve your sleep based on your specific circumstances.

Is CBD Legal? Marijuana-derived CBD products are illegal on the federal level, but are legal under some state laws. Hemp-derived CBD products (with less than 0.3 percent THC) are legal on the federal level, but are still illegal under some [state laws](#). Check your state's laws and those of anywhere you travel. Keep in mind that nonprescription CBD products are not FDA-approved, and may be inaccurately labeled.



Sian Ferguson is a freelance writer and editor based in Cape Town, South Africa. Her writing covers issues relating to social justice, cannabis, and health. You can reach out to her on [Twitter](#).