



7 Things You Need to Know about Cannabis Extracts

What Are Cannabis Extracts?

Cannabis extracts refers to a broad range of products that generally contain higher levels of cannabinoids than are found in the cannabis plant. Cannabinoids are chemical compounds found in cannabis that can affect your mind and body when consumed. THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) is the best known cannabinoid and the one that makes an individual euphoric and intoxicated (or high). CBD (cannabidiol) is a non-intoxicating cannabinoid that might have some therapeutic benefit, although more research is needed to confirm its potential medical use. Cannabis extracts can vary widely in their THC and CBD concentrations. Some extracts can have up to 99% THC, whereas others can be mostly CBD with little THC.

Cannabis extracts can be in solid form (hash or hashish) or in liquid form (oil intended for vaping). Some extracts are named after their appearance or consistency, such as shatter, wax, honeycomb and budder. Cannabis extracts are typically smoked or vaporized, and some can be added to dried cannabis flower. Tinctures are extracts that are placed under the tongue using a spray or dropper. Dabbing is a relatively new way of vaping extracts that requires a specialized water pipe (“dab rig”), a heating element (“nail”), a torch and a dab tool. Dabbing is not recommended for individuals who are new to cannabis.

If you have tried cannabis before and are considering using cannabis extracts, here are seven things you need to know.

1. Always Purchase Your Cannabis Extracts from a Legal Source

Some cannabis extracts (e.g., wax and shatter) are made using complex lab equipment and chemical solvents. Because the extraction process usually involves the use of solvents, some residual solvent can be left in the final cannabis extract. There is also emerging evidence of health issues associated with new chemical formulations that can occur when cannabis extracts are heated to a high temperature. Cannabis extracts made by licence holders are strictly regulated and inspected for quality, including the presence of solvents and pesticides. Extracts from illegal sources are not regulated, which means you do not know how much residual solvent or other chemicals are present in the extracts they produce. Making your own cannabis extracts can be a dangerous process. Play it safe and purchase your cannabis extracts from a [licensed retailer in your province or territory](#).

Purchase your cannabis extracts from legal, licensed retailers.

2. Be Sure To Read the Label Carefully

There are many different extracts that not only vary in their THC concentration, but also in the way they are used. Using a cannabis extract with a higher THC level than you are used to or consuming an extract in an incorrect way can lead to a negative experience. Read the label, paying special attention to **the concentrations of THC and CBD** in the product. For people who are new to extracts, it is a good idea to do your own research about different types of cannabis extracts or ask a friend or family member who has experience with them to understand which type would be best for you. It is



also important to keep in mind that everyone's response to cannabis can differ and it can vary from one time to the next.

Read the label carefully for concentration of THC and CBD, and instructions for use.

3. If You Are New to Cannabis, Do Not Dab

Dabbing is a complicated and risky method for vaping high-strength cannabis extracts, which is not recommended for people who are inexperienced with cannabis. You need to know how to set up a dab rig, how to heat the nail to the right temperature, how much cannabis extract to insert on the nail and how to inhale the vapours. You have to know how to clean and maintain the dab rig. On top of this, the effects of dabbing can kick in quickly and be more intense than smoking dried cannabis. Not knowing what to do can quickly lead to a negative experience. If you choose to try dabbing, you should start with extracts that have lower THC concentrations. Your first few times dabbing should be with a trusted friend or family member who has adequate experience with this method.

If you are new to cannabis, stay away from dabbing.

4. The Effects of Consuming High-Strength Cannabis Extracts Can Be Intense and Felt Quickly

Cannabis extracts can have high levels of THC, up to 99%. Compare that to the 10–25% THC typically found in dried cannabis buds. In other words, high-strength cannabis extracts can **lead to intense intoxication quickly**. They can also **increase your risk of over-intoxication**, symptoms of which include severe anxiety, vomiting and symptoms of psychosis (paranoia). So take precautions. If you are vaping, take one puff and wait five minutes to see what happens before taking another. If you are dabbing, start with a small amount (the size of a grain of rice) and wait at least 10 minutes before doing more. If you are new to cannabis, it is recommended that you avoid high-strength cannabis extracts. Instead, start with a **one or two puffs of a vape with 100 mg/g (10%) or less of THC**. If it is a cannabis extract that you eat (a capsule), start with **no more than 2.5 mg of THC** and wait at least four hours before consuming more. Again, it is best that your first few times using cannabis extracts be with trusted friends or family members who have experience with them. If you or someone you know has consumed too much cannabis and is not feeling well, contact your local poison centre or seek medical attention. When consuming high-strength cannabis extracts, take it easy and start low.

5. Cannabis Extracts Containing High THC Content Can Increase Your Tolerance and Lead to Dependence

Daily or near-daily use of high-strength cannabis extracts, such as wax, shatter and budder, can increase your tolerance to THC. Increased tolerance means that **lower-strength cannabis products will no longer have as much effect on you**. It will take more cannabis to get the same high. Using high-strength cannabis extracts can also lead to **dependence**, such as frequent cravings and withdrawal. Over time, you could develop an addiction to cannabis, also known as **cannabis use disorder**. You can lower your risks of these conditions by using lower-strength cannabis extracts and consuming stronger extracts in smaller quantities and less frequently. Lower-strength cannabis products are those with less than 2.5 mg THC for those that are ingested and 100 mg/g (10%) of THC or less for products to be inhaled.

Limit your use of high-THC cannabis extracts.



6. Be Sure To Properly Store Your Cannabis Products

Cannabis extracts are sensitive to heat and can break down, so it is important to store them with this in mind. Just as there are different cannabis extracts, there are different ways to store them. Take precautions to ensure that products are properly labelled, stored in child-resistant containers that are re-sealed after use, and stored out of sight and reach of children. It is also a good idea to invest in a lockbox or make your own. If you or someone you know has accidentally consumed cannabis and is not feeling well, contact your local poison centre or seek medical attention.

Be sure that your cannabis products are properly labelled and stored.

7. Regular Use of Cannabis Can Affect Your Mental Health

Daily or near-daily cannabis use increases the risk of dependence and can **bring on or worsen disorders related to anxiety or depression**. Regular use of cannabis products containing high levels of THC can **increase your risk of developing psychosis**, especially if you have a family history of psychosis or schizophrenia (see the report, *Clearing the Smoke on Cannabis: Regular Use and Mental Health* for more information). These facts are meant to make you think of the risks associated with using cannabis and to help you make a more informed decision. To lower your risks of experiencing mental health problems, choose products with no more than 100 mg/g (10%) of THC for those that you inhale and no more than 2.5 mg of THC for those that you ingest. Limiting your use of cannabis can also reduce these risks.

Avoid daily or near-daily use of cannabis and choose products with lower levels of THC.

To learn more, visit ccsa.ca/cannabis and canada.ca/cannabis

