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How Medicinal Marijuana Can Help Fight the Opioid Crisis

Our Friends · Tuesday, September 14th, 2021

You've no doubt heard about the opioid crisis in the United States. Opioids are more used than ever, and they [killed an estimated 93,000](#) people in 2020. It is so much of a health crisis that health organizations are working on several strategies to help fight back against this epidemic and limit the number of people who are suffering and dying.

Drug addiction involving opioids is hard for everyone involved. Patients start taking medication because they think it will help them lead a pain-free life. In many cases this happens at first, but the dependency on that medication gets to a point where the patient continues to find and take the medication indefinitely. Any improvements that are gained from taking an opioid can be quickly wiped away from the dependency and the side effects. However, there may be a way to avoid the harmful effects that opioids have on some people. Medicinal marijuana has innumerable properties that can help patients relieve their pain and avoid or stop using opioids. Here are some ways that this can happen.

Marijuana Reduces Pain

The primary use of opioids is to reduce pain. In most cases, this is chronic pain. That's why they can be so addictive. Patients who have had a difficult surgery that involves a long healing period may be prescribed opioids to help them navigate the day and heal with less pain. Many patients who are prescribed opioids also have repetitive stress injuries and back pain that do not go away without the help of medication.

Since they are prescribed for chronic pain, patients need to be on opioids for long periods of time. As time goes on, their tolerance for the medication increases, meaning that they need more and more to feel "right." For some afflictions, however, opioids might not be necessary at all. Marijuana has shown that it has powerful pain-fighting properties. This is especially true of chronic pain. Regular marijuana use under the supervision of [NY medical marijuana doctors](#) is a safe way to reduce pain and improve your quality of life.

It Is Not As Addictive

It's not that marijuana [can't be addictive](#). You can get addicted to it, however you are much less likely to do so when compared to opioids. This means that when patients take it, they are much less likely to form that dangerous dependence. Getting over opioid dependence involves a lot of physical pain and illness, and potential serious health problems when the body starts to react to being denied what it has become accustomed to. With marijuana, even if a patient is addicted, the

side effects of coming off of it are much less severe.

The Side Effects Are Less Severe

Not only are the side effects from coming off it less severe, but they are while you are taking marijuana as well. With opioids, there are many very harmful side effects, including death in the end. Those daily side effects can include nausea, breathing issues, drowsiness, and confusion. These all get worse over time the more that you take the medication.

With marijuana, there are very few serious side effects. Yes, you can feel drowsy, but for the most part it is more of a relaxing sensation. It helps to alleviate nausea as opposed to causing it.

You Won't Overdose

The main cause of death when it comes to opioids is overdoses. People take too much of a drug in too short a period of time, and the body can't handle it. It can prevent messages to the brain to tell it to breathe, and kill the user. It is nearly impossible, on the other hand, to overdose from marijuana that leads to death. Yes, you can take too much at once and get sick, but dying is extremely unlikely.

The opioid crisis is one of the most serious public health issues that we face outside of the Covid-19 pandemic. There is more research needed, but marijuana could be an important tool in fighting back against this deadly affliction that touches so many lives.

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This entry was posted on Tuesday, September 14th, 2021 at 4:17 am and is filed under [Check This Out](#)

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