



CBD: Nature's Boon or Boondoggle?

Cannabis has been used for its medicinal purposes for centuries. Now, at the forefront of its renaissance is one cannabis component that the wellness industry has high hopes for, discovers Tom Bentley.

Miracle cures have been around for generations. There were 19th century promotions of over-the-counter cocaine tablets for toothache, and heroin prescribed for coughs. Doctors appeared on cigarette ads from the 1930s through the 1950s, promoting reduced throat irritation from smoking, and now CBD, a non-psychoactive cannabinoid found in the cannabis plant, is having a moment in the therapeutic spotlight - a moment that looks like it will be here to stay.

Though the claims can sound like one of those old carnival snake oil salesmen peddling a tonic that cures gout, amnesia and liver disease in one fell swoop, evidence is steadily mounting that CBD's therapeutic effects are considerable. Men, particularly those who work out vigorously, might find speedier recovery times, and for the sleepless and the anxious, there's much promise there too. CBD is also being used to aid pain release, combat seizures and ease the symptoms of PTSD.

CBD (technically, *cannabidiol*) products span a splendid range, with the component laced into everything from cakes, chocolates and cookies to oils and creams, where it's legal to do so, which means Canada and an ever-increasing raft of countries in Europe, including the United Kingdom, Spain and Denmark. In the US, CBD is illegal federally, and its legality in each state depends on whether it's made from hemp or marijuana. However, the tide is turning as states re-examine their stances.

A 2017 report from the National Academies Press stated that "in adults with chronic pain, patients who were treated with cannabis or cannabinoids are more likely to experience a clinically significant reduction in pain symptoms," and a survey of thousands of CBD users at HelloMD, the online community that brings together doctors and cannabis patients, found that almost half of people who used CBD products stopped taking traditional medicines.

Dr. Stuart Titus, PhD, the president and CEO of Medical Marijuana, Inc. says, "I cannot say that CBD works for 100 percent of the people 100 percent of the time, but many have reported that they are being helped. There are certain pain receptor sites in the human body that are very accepting of cannabinoids. About 50mgs of CBD daily seems to support this endogenous cannabinoid system."



Dr. Titus also mentions that CBD products are being used to replace opioids and show strong promise in reducing the frequency of children's epileptic seizures, which has led the FDA to license a CBD-based anti-seizure drug.

Kelly Stoll, co-founder of Vital Body Therapeutics in Santa Cruz, CA, and a manufacturer of CBD creams, says CBD massages have equal benefit for men and women: "The positive feedback from a CBD massage is equal across the board - both men and women report a diminishment of pain and inflammation, as well as a profound sense of relaxation and even an improvement in the quality of their sleep. We suspect this is because CB1 and CB2 receptors, the molecules that bind to CBD and trigger the healing response in the body, are similarly prevalent in both men and women."

Manufacturers have jumped into the market in big ways, from gluten-free CBD and melatonin gummy candies that become part of your daily supplement routine, and anti-inflammatory creams for aching feet to the likes of Care by Design's marijuana-derived - rather than hemp - CBD sub-lingual spray (which I regularly use), and Kana's lavender-scented night mask. There are vape pens by Bloom Farms and CBD chocolates by Kiva Confections and today's savvy consumer can opt for bottled water, hand-made bath bombs and even single-estate coffee laced with the cannabis cure-all.

As for effects most relevant to men, some NFL players are touting CBD products for pain relief after games, and I've seen men's "anti-aging and anti-inflammatory" CBD skin serums hitting market shelves. There are even some allegedly libido-boosting CBD applications. However, that last one sounds like it's moving back towards the snake-oil salesmen, who just might be out of business.