

Cannabis and Older Adults Clinician Toolkit

STEP 1: ACKNOWLEDGE CANNABIS* USE

Ask older patients if they are currently taking cannabis for any reason

Including this question in routine patient care (e.g. medication review/ lifestyle counselling) can help to normalize discussion around cannabis with older adults

Assessing Appropriateness of Medical **Cannabis for Older Adults**

Yes

No, but would

Continue by asking about:

- Reasons for use
- Perceived effectiveness
- Adverse effects
- Duration
- Frequency
- Amount of product and type/mode
- Access

No

Document that your older patient is not taking cannabis and continue with your assessment

STEP 2: REVIEW







Using (A) (B) (C) Framework

(Acknolwedge, Review, Collaborate)

Evaluate whether older patients are appropriate candidates for medical cannabis:

· Consider existing health issues

consider it

This opens the

conversation to

your patient

discuss cannabis in

greater detail with

- Review cannabis indications and evidence
- Discuss therapeutic options and possible role of cannabis

Review History and Potential Risk to Assess Appropriateness^{2,3}

- Falls: any in last 12 months, use of mobility aids
- · Cognitive function: pre-existing diagnosis (dementia, Mild Cognitive Impairment), changes in past year
- Mental health: e.g. schizophrenia, mood disorders, PTSD
- Cardiovascular: e.g. uncontrolled hypertension, arrhythmias
- Medications: sedative-hypnotics, psychoactive medications, other drug interactions
- Past or active substance use disorder: alcohol, prescription medication, illicit drugs, cannabis
- · Employment/leisure: activities requiring attention, focus, problem solving, and physical abilities
- · Driving: review driving habits

Physical Exam

- Blood pressure and heart rate: ensure stable, postural vitals
- Transfers and gait: Timed Up and Go Test, Short Physical **Performance Battery Test**
- Cognitive/mental health assessment: objective cognitive testing, mood screens if indicated
- Vision and hearing: objective testing if indicated

Contraindications⁴

- Known hypersensitivity to cannabis or cannabinoids
- Severe cardiovascular and cerebrovascular disease
- Severe renal or liver disease
- History of psychiatric disorders including;
- Schizophrenia or other psychoses (with high THC content)

STEP 3: COLLABORATE

Discuss the appropriateness of continuing or trialling cannabis with your older adult patient

When your patient is a good candidate for cannabis

- Discuss whether your patient wants to pursue a treatment plan that includes cannabis
- If yes, develop Treatment Plan Checklist (see example)

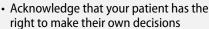
Treatment Plan Checklist

- Establish goals of cannabis use
- Discuss potential adverse effects, medication interactions and safety considerations
- Write down the form(s), dosage(s), route(s), and when to take cannabis
- Sign a patient agreement (if needed)
- Organize a follow-up plan
- Explain how to obtain the product

When your patient indicates they will

use cannabis despite concerns or risks that

have been flagged



- Review the evidence and how potential risks appear to outweigh possible benefits
- Inform your patient that cannabis will be added to their medical record
- · Continue an open dialogue and establish a follow-up plan so the risks/ concerns identified can be monitored

When your patient is not a good candidate for cannabis

- Review how potential risks appear to outweigh possible benefits
- · Collaborate with your patient on other potential treatments/interventions that could be explored
- Discuss revisiting cannabis as a therapeutic option in the future if circumstances change
- 1. J. Choi Cannabis and Older Adults Project March 2022
- Minerbi A, Häuser W, Fitzcharles M-A. Medical Cannabis for Older Patients. *Drugs & Aging*. 2018;36(1):39-51. doi:10.1007/s40266-018-0616-5

To learn more or register for asynchronous, accredited

eLearning modules on Cannabis and Older Adults visit

- 3. Canada H. For health care professionals: Cannabis and cannabinoids Canada.ca. Canada.ca.
- Published 2018. For health care professionals: Cannabis and cannabinoids Canada.ca
 4. Welcome to the Interprofessional Comprehensive Geriatric Toolkit. Interprofessional Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment Toolkit. Accessed November 22, 2021. https://cgatoolkit.ca/

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Santé Canada

https://ccsmh.ca/cannabis-and-older-adults-project/ *The term cannabis refers to all modes of cannabis including prescription cannabinoids.