



# ABUSE LIABILITIES OF THC AND CBD

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Drug abuse is characterized by the deliberate, non-therapeutic utilization of a drug or substance to attain desired psychological or physiological effects, as outlined by the Assessment of Abuse Potential for Drugs.

CBD exhibits no abuse potential, whereas THC demonstrates a low abuse liability. CBD's failure to alter the brain's reward system or elevate dopamine levels negates reinforcement properties. Conversely, THC is sought for its immediate stress relief and pleasurable effects, often achieved through smoking or vaping, and may induce dependence to some extent. Chronic THC usage leads to tolerance, necessitating increased doses for the same effect as the body adapts to the drug. This heightened tolerance contributes to THC's abuse liability potential, prompting users to seek stronger highs.

While tolerance to THC can be surmounted, and the body can readjust without THC, relapse remains a risk even after physical withdrawal. Psychological dependence and associative behaviors, such as the "wake and bake" routine, contribute to potential relapse instances.

Unlike THC, CBD lacks evidence of relapse, dependence, reinforcement, or tolerance buildup. Abrupt cessation of chronic CBD use does not trigger withdrawal symptoms. Moreover, CBD's non-agonistic action at cannabinoid receptors further diminishes its abuse potential.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Food and Drug Administration Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER). (2017, January). Assessment of abuse potential of drugs guidance for industry. Retrieved December 24, 2022, from <https://www.fda.gov/media/116739/download>

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