

Medical cannabis

Access to safe, effective treatment is an important part of your recovery. We will consider the approval of medical cannabis for the medically necessary treatment of work-related injuries in some specific cases. Our medical cannabis policy reflects medical evidence, advice and knowledge about the benefits and risks of medical cannabis use, as well as the law that governs use of cannabis for medical treatment in Canada.

What is included under this policy?

- Pharmaceutical cannabinoids which are prescription drugs approved by Health Canada to treat specific medical conditions. These include Nabilone (Cesamet™ and generics) and Nabiximols (Sativex™), and
- Medical cannabis which is a broader term that includes multiple forms of cannabis (e.g., dried, topical, oil, edibles, etc.). It must be authorized for use and sourced from official Health Canada approved providers. Due to the health risks associated with smoking, we do not support the use of any smoked or vaped cannabis products.

WCB may provide coverage for 'medical cannabis' but does not provide coverage for recreational cannabis in any form.

Coverage for medical cannabis

We may consider coverage for medical cannabis if it is recommended by a medical doctor for the treatment of any of the following condition(s) resulting from a work-related injury or disease or its treatment:

- Chronic neuropathic pain resulting from an injury to the nervous system.
- Spasticity resulting from an injury to your central nervous system or spinal cord.
- Nausea, vomiting and lost of appetite associated with cancer chemotherapy.
- Opioid/narcotic harm reduction.
- Palliative care.

All of the following criteria must be met before medical cannabis is approved:

- 1. It is authorized for a designated condition.**
- 2. It is authorized by your treating health professional.**
- 3. All conventional treatments are exhausted.**

The physician who authorizes your medical cannabis must also manage the ongoing care of your injury and your response to medical cannabis treatment.

Your doctor must exhaust standard therapies before initial entitlement to medical cannabis will be considered. Your doctor will need to trial pharmaceutical cannabinoids with you before we will consider funding cannabis for medical use in all cases, except for palliative or end-of-life care or where medically contraindicated.

- 4. It is authorized following clinical assessment.**

Your doctor must perform an in-person clinical assessment before we consider initial entitlement to medical cannabis. You will need ongoing reassessments every three months to support ongoing entitlement to medical cannabis.

- 5. The benefits outweigh the risks.**

Medical cannabis may be covered when the benefits of the treatment outweigh the risks to your health. Risk factors such as your age and medical history may need medical confirmation that medical cannabis is the only remaining course of action and the risk of not attempting a trial of medical cannabis is greater than the potential harm.

- 6. Medical cannabis is not interfering with your recovery and safe return to work.**

Before purchasing cannabis to treat your injury, you must obtain pre-approval from WCB. Please speak with your claim owner.

Safe dose and type

Your doctor must authorize medical cannabis at the lowest safe and effective dose in terms of both the daily quantity authorized and tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) percentage (a daily quantity of 3g and a maximum THC level of 9%).

Suspension or termination of coverage

We may suspend or end your coverage for medical cannabis when:

- There is insufficient improvement in your pain and/or function.
- Its use appears to be jeopardizing your recovery or return to work.
- You have developed significant side effects.
- There is evidence of misuse.

Additional resources

- [Cannabis medical patient booklet](#) – RxFiles, University of Saskatchewan
- [Clearing the Smoke on Cannabis \(May 2022\)](#) – Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction

