

# Cannabis-based compound may reduce seizures in children with epilepsy

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Generalized 3 Hz spike and wave discharges in a child with childhood absence epilepsy. Credit: Wikipedia.

Interest has been growing in the use of cannabinoids—the active chemicals in cannabis or marijuana—for the treatment of epilepsy in children. A recent *Epilepsia* analysis of relevant published studies indicates that this strategy looks promising.

The analysis included four randomized controlled trials and 19 non-randomized studies, primarily involving cannabidiol, a particular type of cannabinoid that does not have psychoactive effects.

Among randomized controlled [trials](#) involving children with severe forms of epilepsy, there was no statistically [significant difference](#) between cannabidiol and placebo in terms of freedom from seizures, sleep disruption, or vomiting. There was a statistically significant reduction in the median frequency of monthly seizures with cannabidiol compared with placebo and an increase in number of participants with at least a 50 percent reduction in seizures.

"Although we saw no significant difference in the number of children who became completely [seizure](#) free, we that found a significant number of these children achieved a 50 percent or more reduction in seizures. Any reduction in seizures has a striking impact on the lives of these [children](#) and their families," said lead author Jesse Elliott, of the University of Ottawa, in Canada. "Research in this area is active, and we expect a dramatic increase in the number of studies over the next few years."

**More information:** Jesse Elliott et al, Cannabis-based products for pediatric epilepsy: A systematic review, *Epilepsia* (2018). [DOI: 10.1111/epi.14608](https://doi.org/10.1111/epi.14608)

Provided by Wiley

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