

How can medical marijuana benefit older adults?

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Managing symptoms such as pain, nausea, and psychiatric illness can be challenging as people age. A new *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* review highlights what's currently known about the indications and risks of medical marijuana use for older adults.

The review notes that medical marijuana appears useful for the treatment of pain (particularly neuropathic pain) and chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting. It has neuropsychiatric side effects but even when smoked, it does not appear to increase the risk for lung cancer.

Importantly, however, [medical marijuana](#)'s positive and negative effects have not been thoroughly studied specifically in older adults.

"There is a dearth of evidence supporting the use of cannabinoids for medical indications in [older adults](#). Common sense practices are applicable here though, including performing a thorough assessment for side effects and expecting that lower doses will have a greater impact," said lead author Dr. Joshua Briscoe, of the Duke University Medical Center. "As younger generations age, it is also important to expect that they have experience using marijuana in recreational contexts, which will affect their approach to its use in a medical setting."

More information: Joshua Briscoe et al, Medical Marijuana Use in Older Adults, *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (2018). [DOI: 10.1111/jgs.15346](#)

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