

MARIJUANA AND LUNG HEALTH

While the health consequences of smoking marijuana are not completely understood, marijuana smoke is known to contain many irritants and carcinogens and may lead to, or contribute to, respiratory problems. Many physicians are concerned about recommending marijuana to their patients for this very reason. Fortunately, several options are available for reducing or eliminating the dangers of marijuana smoking for individuals who find symptom relief from marijuana use.

The most obvious way to avoid respiratory trouble is to take oral preparations of marijuana, such as oil capsules or marijuana baked goods (also known as “medibles” or “edibles.” Oral ingestion of marijuana has the benefit of providing relief for longer periods of time and also provides a discrete way to medicate. However, orally ingesting marijuana can be slower to take effect than smoking and a proper dosage may be difficult to measure, much less adjust. Because oral preparations can be more powerful than smoking, we counsel patients to start with small amounts, and increase the dose gradually, according to comfort level and medical need, until the optimum dose is obtained.

For more information on how to prepare marijuana for oral use please check our [class schedule](#) for our next "Medicine Preparation" class.

The second way to ingest medical marijuana in order to reduce respiratory risk is a process known as "vaporization." Vaporization is the process of heating cannabis to temperatures of approximately 180–190 degrees C., which causes THC and other cannabinoids to vaporize without the combustion of any organic matter. In essence, vaporization provides the therapeutic benefits of marijuana while significantly reducing the harmful consequences of smoking. Many different types of vaporizers are available on the market today, but only the [Volcano Vaporizer](#) has been scientifically studied and shown to effectively reduce the amount of tar and carcinogens produced through the heating of marijuana. Many other vaporizers of varying price and quality are available, and Compassion Center offers three of the less expensive versions in our retail store.