

# The Checkup

Health in the News - and in Your Life



top Network News

MY PROFILE

Friends' Activity

View More Activity

Column Archive | On Twitter: [J Huget](#) and [MisFits](#) | [Fitness & Nutrition News](#) | [XML](#) [RSS Feed](#)

### ABOUT THE BLOGGERS



About Jennifer and Rob

### SEARCH THIS BLOG

Go

### RECENT POSTS

- [Clinics' intervention can ward off 'reproductive coercion'](#)
- [Study: Prophylactic surgeries protect women](#)
- [Obama administration appeals stem cell funding decision](#)
- [Is there room for deep-fried Pop-Tarts in your diet?](#)
- [NIH shuts down its own stem cell research](#)

### Entries By Category

- [About the Blog](#)
- [Cancer](#)
- [Economy](#)
- [Family Health](#)
- [General Health](#)
- [Health Policy](#)
- [Injury prevention](#)
- [Is That Right?](#)
- [Kids' health](#)
- [Me Minus 10](#)
- [Motherhood](#)
- [Nutrition and Fitness](#)
- [Obesity](#)
- [School Nutrition](#)
- [Strokes](#)
- [Vitamins](#)
- [Women's Health](#)
- [Workplace health](#)
- [stem cells](#)
- [Full Category Archive](#)

### Entries By Date

- [Full Weekly Archive](#)

### SUBSCRIBE

+ Select ...

### HEALTH SECTION

### BLOGROLL

- [Well](#)
- [Wall Street Journal's Health Blog](#)
- [Julie's Health Club](#)
- [Eat Like Me](#)

## The haze surrounding medical marijuana

As the District of Columbia joins the small group of U.S. jurisdictions [legalizing the sale of marijuana for medical purposes](#), it finally occurred to me to consider whether I'd ever ask for a prescription myself.

[All of the 14 states \(and now D.C.\)](#) that allow marijuana for medical purposes list [multiple sclerosis](#) (or the spasms associated with the disease) as a condition for which marijuana may be administered. Marijuana has been shown in some limited research to relieve muscle spasticity (stiffness or tightness), one of MS's common symptoms. (In March, the [FDA approved the use of Botox](#) for treating MS-related spasticity.)



(Photo by Justin Sullivan/Getty Images)

I'm grateful every day of my life that my own MS hasn't (yet?) plagued me with such symptoms. I take a daily injection of an [FDA-approved drug](#) that so far appears to have kept such things from developing. (That rapping sound you hear is my knocking on wood.)

But if I woke up tomorrow with painfully stiff muscles and joints, or if my hands were incapacitated by spasticity, would I consider asking my neurologist for a 'script to score some pot?

I really don't know.

There's scant scientific evidence showing that the benefits of smoking pot to treat MS outweigh the risks. Here's [what the National MS Society says](#):

There is a very real need for additional therapies to treat stubborn and often painful symptoms of MS. However, based on the studies to date -- and the fact that long-term use of marijuana may be associated with significant, serious side effects -- it is the opinion of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society's Medical Advisory Board that there are currently insufficient data to recommend marijuana or its derivatives as a treatment for MS symptoms.

And, [as the American Cancer Society notes](#), smoking marijuana can increase your risk of lung cancer. Before taking such a plunge, I'd want to carefully sort out -- with my doctor -- the risk/benefit ratio.

Beyond that, I have two teenaged kids. What kind of message would my pot-smoking send them? Maybe it would suggest to them that smoking pot's okay. They might just shrug it off, plunking my pot in the same category as my nightly nightcap. Or maybe they'd view my smoking as a positive sign that I'm taking care of my body's needs and trying to stay well, however I can.

This whole issue is perhaps different for me than it would be for many others in my generation because I have smoked pot exactly once in my life, taking exactly one toke off a bong in my friend's back yard before deciding unequivocally that it was just not my thing. How strange it would be to start smoking pot at age 50!

Surely I'm not alone in pondering this situation. I'd like to hear how others of you have sorted out your attitude toward using medical marijuana. And we haven't had a poll in The Checkup for a while; please take a moment to vote in today's.

By Jennifer LaRue Huget | August 30, 2010; 7:00 AM ET

Categories: [Alternative and Complementary Medicine](#), [Cancer](#), [Chronic Conditions](#), [Multiple Sclerosis](#), [The Business of Health](#)

- [Food Politics](#)
- [FoodThink with Wansink](#)
- [The Nutrition Data Blog](#)
- [Consumer Reports Health Blog](#)
- [Booster Shots](#)

Save & Share:         

Previous: [U.S. birth rate falls again, a possible effect of economic downturn](#)

Next: [New clues to unnecessary Caesareans](#)

### Add The Checkup to Your Site

Stay on top of the latest health news! This easy-to-use widget is simple to add to your own Web site and will update every time there's a new installment of The Checkup.

[Get This Widget >>](#)

### Comments

Please go out and learn about medical cannabis. Read a book or 2 about it before before you take the plunge it is not for everybody. Realize that most medical cannabis patient do not smoke it. There are many ingestion options besides smoking, which seems to be the issue the American Cancer Society has against it. Here is a short list of ways to take cannabis without smoking it. First, a under tongue alcohol spray, just like GW Pharmaceuticals new drug Sativex. Or take hemp oil orally (the oil is just the essential oils of the plant removed from the leaves and flowers-See Phoenix Tears for more info.)Or the ever popular special brownies, make them potent so that the calories per dose is low. And a newer method, the vaporizer. It heats the plant material to 180 degrees so that the oils of the plant vaporize without burning the plant material. This stops the inhalation of carcinogenic smoke. Good luck and feel well.

Posted by: PabloKoh | August 30, 2010 8:43 AM | [Report abuse](#)

I am glad to hear that your MS has not caused you any spasticity. Mine has. It affects the muscles of my left leg and foot and does impinge on my daily life (gait is causing knee pain, spasms can interrupt sleep). My doc is treating with Botox (which is helping), but i know that there may come a point when the Botox is not as effective and medical marijuana may be the next best option. The UK recently approved the use of a oral marijuana derivative (the benefits, without the risks associated with smoking marijuana) and hopefully the US will follow shortly and the previous poster provided good alternative to smoking marijuana. MS remains an illusive disease to manage and all resources should be available to those who deal with it.

Posted by: RKCW | August 30, 2010 9:22 AM | [Report abuse](#)

The evidence is abundantly clear that cannabis has medical utility. Anyone who thinks that medical cannabis is just a 'scam' to get high are operating on information from years previous that has been clearly demonstrated to be false. As pointed out by the previous poster there is no need to smoke.

If you disapprove of the medical cannabis distribution chain you should be pounding on Congress' door and demanding that the Feds accept it as medicine and authorize doctors to write prescription and pharmacies to fill those prescriptions. Until that idiocy is fixed the dispensary system and home cultivation is the only system of which I'm aware to get medical cannabis to the patients.

The list of authorities that have accepted that cannabis is medicine grows every month. Last month the Pharmacy Boards of Oregon and Iowa did move or recommended that the legislature move cannabis to schedule 2 which means that they recognize it as medicine. Iowa had to be sued and ordered by the Court to get them to even do the study which led them to make that recommendation. After doing the study they voted unanimously that cannabis is medicine. The people who were thought the study such a waste of time did a 180 degree turn and by a vote of 6-0 recognized that cannabis is medicine. I think it reasonable to infer from just that action by the Iowa Board that the evidence that cannabis is medicine is overwhelming. The Iowa Board of Pharmacy is not staffed by hippies.

The governments of Holland, Canada and Israel have all recognized cannabis as medicine and provide their patients directly. Germany has just joined them, but in Germany the doctors will write prescriptions that will be filled by licensed pharmacies.

Rhode Islands legislature codified into State law that cannabis is medicine, and overrode the Governor's veto of that bill. They had no regrets because after a year or two they voted for and passed an expansion of the program including authorizing dispensaries. They once again had the supermajority needed to override yet another veto from the know nothing Governor.

New Mexico's legislature studied the issue and then legalized cannabis as medicine. The State licenses dispensaries and cultivation centers to meet the patients needs.

New Jersey's legislature codified into State law that cannabis is medicine this year.

The DC City Council voted unanimously to codify cannabis as medicine earlier this year.

Maine's voters approved an expansion of their medical cannabis law and authorized licensed dispensaries to meet the needs of their patients.

The American Medical Association this year recommended that cannabis be moved to Schedule 2 and be recognized as medicine.

The British Medical Association recognizes cannabis as medicine.

The California Medical Association has recognized cannabis as medicine for over a decade.

The American College of Physicians recognizes cannabis as medicine.

Posted by: [bpayne2](#) | August 30, 2010 9:26 AM | [Report abuse](#)

---

The International Cannabinoid Research Society members aren't a bunch of whacked out hippy alternative medical practitioners. I think it notable that Dr Donald Tashkin is a member. For those unaware, for a decade and a half Dr. Tashkin was the ONDCP's 'go to' guy when they needed 'research' 'proving' that cannabis is dangerous to ingest. Dr. Tashkin has repudiated all of the bogus research that he did at the behest of the ONDCP. But the ONDCP still trots out his work when it suits them. The ONDCP has no compunction in presenting bald faced lies as fact when it suits them to do so.

Bayer Pharmaceuticals has made a substantial investment in GW Pharmaceuticals. GW Pharmaceutical's entire existence is to make whole plant cannabis compounds and sell them to sick people by prescription. Oh well, one of the nice things about the ignorance of the masses in this case is that GWP's stock is cheap. The \$10,000 I've invested in their stock will make a substantial contribution to my retirement after the know nothings are finally shown to be incorrect. Steenkin' filthy rich is really not out of the question. I've put my money where my mouth is. There is simply no doubt that the endocannabinoid system is essential for keeping human beings healthy and happy. I do think that Bayer knows what is medicine a lot better than know nothing laymen or politicians with a political agenda.

Some people give this idiotic line that the people were 'scammed' and that the result is not what they'd intended, as if that were true. So why do current surveys show that 75-80% of the people in the US actively support allowing doctors and scientists to recommend the use of cannabis as medicine? It's been 14 years since California passed Prop 215 and support for allowing doctors and scientists to make the decision of what's medicine has only increased.

The only reason that these 'vague' medical cannabis laws have taken root is because it's the only way to get the needed medicine to the patients because of the idiotic and cruel Federal laws that prohibit doctors and scientists from making medical decisions, instead leaving it to politicians with a political agenda.

Has anyone reading this ever woke up sick and thought, 'well I'm sick, I'd better call a politician'? Perhaps you go to a doctor, but make sure to get a second opinion from a politician? If not, have you ever known anyone who did think that? Then why are we letting politicians with a political agenda decide what is medicine and what is not? The decision should be left up to accredited scientist and licensed medical professionals. Did you know that doctors can prescribe cocaine and methamphetamine? Look up the brand name Desoxyn if you don't believe me. But the fact that so many know nothings have no clue that there already is medical cocaine and medical meth seems to me to support the notion that doctors do a pretty good job of dispensing these substances appropriately.

Posted by: [bpayne2](#) | August 30, 2010 9:28 AM | [Report abuse](#)

---

There is an awful lot of cluelessness in this post. The MS Society may well be right to avoid recommending cannabis, but the ACS doesn't contribute meaningfully to the debate. And getting exercised about what your kid would think? Come on, how would using medical cannabis be worse than/different from medical use of morphine or methamphetamine?

Posted by: [wankme](#) | August 30, 2010 11:14 AM | [Report abuse](#)

---

\$113 billion is spent on marijuana every year in the U.S., and because of the prohibition \*every\* dollar of it goes straight into the hands of criminals. Far from preventing people from using marijuana, the prohibition instead creates zero legal supply amid massive and unrelenting demand.

According to the ONDCP, two-thirds of the Mexican drug cartel's money comes from selling marijuana in the U.S., and they protect this cash flow by brutally

torturing, murdering and dismembering thousands of innocent people.

If we can STOP people using marijuana then we need to do so now, but if we can't then we need to legalize the production and sale of marijuana to adults with after-tax prices set too low for the cartels to match. One way or the other, we have to force the cartels out of the marijuana market and eliminate their highly lucrative marijuana incomes - no business can withstand the loss of two-thirds of its revenue!

To date, the cartels have amassed more than 100,000 "foot soldiers" and operate in 230 U.S. cities, and the longer they're able to exploit the prohibition the more powerful they'll get and the more our own personal security is put in jeopardy.

Posted by: jway86 | August 30, 2010 11:45 AM | [Report abuse](#)

---

Sorry to burst the writers bubble, but the American Cancer Society and any organization run by the government has not done any recent testing to have a conclusion for OR against medical marijuana. This is because of the Office of National Drug Control Policy and FDA to name a few.

Smoking pot will not give you lung cancer- if anything it can reduce the odds you will develop it- a finding that has been baffling scientists until about 15 years ago until we had the ability to learn more about the mechanics at play. To put it simply it activates a gene called P53, which causes your healthy cells to secrete a tumor suppressant. The purpose of it is to re-enable apoptosis in cancerous cells. Every single type of cancer must turn off the ability to perform what is known as "programmed cell death", the tumor suppressant turns that back on and the cancer cell dies. So while smoking anything has carcinogens- not everything delivers an anti-cancer compound to the site there could be potential damage (by the way a hamburger has more carcinogens than what a heavy marijuana smoker inhales everyday)

Secondly it attacks cancer by reducing available blood supply to tumors- while increasing blood flow in areas damaged like a heart from a heart attack, or a stroke- furthermore you also gain protection in event they happen. Doesn't just clear up glaucoma- it is a complete blood flow regulator.

Then you have its ability to spur neurogenesis (growing brain cells) in the part of your brain that is directly damaged by stress. It takes time but it is not degenerative like alcohol. And can cure things like post traumatic stress disorder over decades of use.

These are facts that come from the highest learning institutions around the world who are not afraid to lose federal funding. If you have kept a close eye on the subject in biochemistry and genetics news then you know the burden of proof now lay with those who claim it does NOT promote "A healthy, happier, longer, life"

I can cite you many studies full of negatives but they are always full of confounding factors or a clear line of funding (usually by the ONDCP lol) and those holes are being blown wide open and a light shone on them by actually being able to observe what is happening- not just speculate on long last effects.

Posted by: Egadsno | August 30, 2010 11:57 AM | [Report abuse](#)

---

Your teens will figure out how to get their medical marijuana cards online or around the neighborhood and they smoke their own pot. You don't even have to smoke in front of them because you end up joining them.

Teens at California school getting high on medical marijuana  
<http://www.wbir.com/news/national/story.aspx?storyid=43141>

Medical marijuana is the biggest hoax in the history of the US. Medical marijuana is supposed to be in line with the Compassionate Use Act for those with debilitating illnesses, yet anyone can get a medical marijuana card. It is highly unregulated.

Posted by: tij12345 | August 30, 2010 12:01 PM | [Report abuse](#)

---

I think you should try it to see how it affects you. Each person is different. But if you're fine now, then don't medicate when there is no problem. I don't think you should smoke it since that's bad for your lungs. But you can eat it, and there may be other ways to get what is in marijuana without the smoke. I have also read that the pills and synthetic marijuana are not the same as the plant--they don't contain all the same ingredients. You'd have to try the pills and the plant to see how they worked.

Posted by: kimk1 | August 30, 2010 12:21 PM | [Report abuse](#)

---

The poll results were illuminating. I think that it explains why families who are dealing with catastrophic illnesses don't seem to grasp the nature of clinical trials.

The question asked was whether you would take marijuana if it MIGHT help with symptoms. "Might", as in "and might not, either". "Sure, it's no big deal" is a strangely cavalier response to something that might provide zero benefits and is all but guaranteed to provide some (usually mild) side effects, like feeling stoned. A person who dislikes opioids because it makes him feel stupid and stoned is unlikely to appreciate the same types of side effects in marijuana -- and at least with opioids, we know that they provide some benefit. The patient in this question has no such assurance. That's the meaning of "might".

If we can't read "might" and see the implicit "and might not" in a question like this, then no wonder patients are astonished when they discover that the latest, greatest wonder drug being tested didn't work.

Posted by: jijj1 | August 30, 2010 1:18 PM | [Report abuse](#)

---

"What kind of message would my pot-smoking send them? Maybe it would suggest to them that smoking pot's okay."

Yeah, so what? Pot-smoking IS okay. Better to worry about those parties you throw at which endless alcohol is served.

Posted by: Rich393 | August 30, 2010 1:20 PM | [Report abuse](#)

---

What would your teens say if you started smoking marijuana? They'd say, smoking's disgusting and unhealthy -- if you're going to use marijuana at all (for medical or non-medical purposes), then why not be nice to your body in the process? (Unless you're already in the habit of not taking care of you're body -- then I guess they wouldn't question such behavior.) Why not try eating, drinking, or vaporizing your cannabis, for a start? If I were you, trying to delay the progression of my MS, I would use cannabis pre-emptively to take advantage of its neuroprotective effects. Life is simply too short to bank on any one therapy -- why not do whatever you can to stave off the disease, especially that which is the healthiest and least likely to have any side effects (cannabis)?

Posted by: rudolphthered | August 30, 2010 1:51 PM | [Report abuse](#)

---

The way to use cannabis for medical reasons is to eat it. By trial and error find out what dosage will provide relief without getting spaced out.

Posted by: kkrimmer | August 30, 2010 2:26 PM | [Report abuse](#)

---

The cannabis law has been a mistake ever since congress passed the Marihuana Tax Act in 1937. For 73 years, this awful law has been used to deny us one of the best herbal medicines in existence, which has been in use for over 5,000 years.

Half the people in our prisons and jails are there for selling or using illegal drugs. The cost to our society has been immense.

Posted by: alance | August 30, 2010 2:53 PM | [Report abuse](#)

---

Odd, the article claims:

"smoking marijuana can increase your risk of lung cancer."

Yet the cited link says:

"most recent epidemiologic studies have not found a substantial effect on cancer risk. "

Perhaps you're using different verbiage from the citation to substantiate the basis for the article's adverse take?

Posted by: FredEvil | August 30, 2010 3:35 PM | [Report abuse](#)

---

The failure of the Federal Government to allow the NIH to significantly fund research in this area has resulted in the current mess this field is in. We former NIHers know what is needed; double blind, placebo (or an established/accepted treatment)controlled clinical trials. Comparing different delivery systems, isolating and testing products produced by burning cannabis, etc. Interestingly, the tobacco companies actually have machines that can "smoke" a cigarette and isolate chemical products in the "inhaled" smoke. The way to proceed to answer these questions is very straight forward. But no one in charge in the Federal Government wants to know the answer!

Posted by: kenarmy | August 30, 2010 3:41 PM | [Report abuse](#)

---

..."As a registered Voter/Vet USAF, I am disgusted that American's are sitting in our overcrowded jails, OVER POT! To this Christian, and Graduate Student, Masters Program, East Tennessee State University, Professional Studies, Class 2010, it is Injustice at it's "WORSE AND REPUBLICANS AT THEIR BEST!

..."True Patriotism, "Hates Injustice In It's Own Land, "MORE THAN ANYWHERE ELSE."

---Clarence Darrow

..."Here in East Tennessee they are locking up College Students, taking their car, property, liberty, "OVER A JOINT" and LAUGHING ALL THE WAY TO THE BANK!

..."While in 14 other states you can buy it with a prescription, and nothing is said, while the South builds NEW prisons, and NEW \$60 MILLION DOLLAR jails over it faster than factories, as the Republicans go laughing all the way to the bank and turn College Student, and Citizens into CRIMINALS OVER POT!

... "A time comes when silence is betrayal." ---Martin L. King

Who also said, "Injustice in America anywhere is Injustice in America EVERYWHERE!

Sincerely, Tom Birchfield, Voter/Vet USAF, Graduate Student,  
Masters Program, Professional  
Studies, East Tennessee State University/Class/2010

Posted by: ztcb41 | August 30, 2010 3:45 PM | [Report abuse](#)

---

What are the risks that potentially weigh against seeking a prescription? Your article doesn't really say - it just takes for granted that the risks are there. To make an informed decision, you might want to dig a little deeper into the facts.

Posted by: fleeciewool | August 30, 2010 4:02 PM | [Report abuse](#)

---

You can also consume cannabis in the form of Hasish/Hash, either smoked, vaporized or as food, even as your own "pill.

Hasish or Hash is made from the oil glands of the fresh marijuana plant and contain basically all the wax-like oils and flower matter from the bud, the same part that is smoked. It is a "purer" form of cannabis that provides all the benefits without needing to consume the actual plant matter. Hash is usually extracted by means of freezing water and micro-shifting of the resulting mesh.

Hash can be smoked (offering a much lesser risk because it contains just the pure active oils and almost no plant matter), it is almost perfect for vaporizers, can be added as a component to any food (almost in the same way as you add cube chicken stock.) or you can simply finger roll it into small balls and shallow it like a pill, adjusting the size of it to fit your needs and effects; Unlike pharmaceuticals, you will never OD on cannabis. At worst, you will get massive munchies and take a very long nap.

On the downside, it is much more expensive than weed, you NEED TO ENSURE it is pure and unadulterated and consistency between producers fluctuates a lot. Also "which" strains of marijuana were used in the making of the hash makes a big difference in its effects.

Currently California's producers are leading the way in creating a standard but far from being there.

Posted by: Mighty7 | August 30, 2010 5:49 PM | [Report abuse](#)

---

"A person who dislikes opioids because it makes him feel stupid and stoned is unlikely to appreciate the same types of side effects in marijuana -- and at least with opioids, we know that they provide some benefit. The patient in this question has no such assurance. That's the meaning of "might."

More cluelessness. There's a significant number of patients who were on opioids and later found that cannabis consumption allowed them to either quit or diminish their use of opioids. These former opioid users are some of the biggest fans of cannabinoids. You have no grasp of the facts about medical cannabis. Only a total idiot would conclude that medical cannabis is a 'scam' or a 'stalking horse.' Did you even take the time to look at the list of some of the of authorities who have recognized cannabis as medicine?

Did you ever answer that question I posed to you earlier this afternoon? The question was "aren't you really a pothead in disguise posting with the goal of making those against cannabis look like total idiots?"

Posted by: bpayne2 | August 30, 2010 6:05 PM | [Report abuse](#)

---

It's not clear that you've read the ACS page that you refer your readers to. Health is a quagmire, and the moment you loose your credibility ....

"And, as the American Cancer Society notes, smoking marijuana can increase your risk of lung cancer."

Posted by: tdoak | August 30, 2010 6:26 PM | [Report abuse](#)

---

Excerpts from my (never answered) 2008 letter to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

The Coalition for Medical Marijuana New Jersey, Inc. (CMMNJ) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to educate the public about the benefits of medical marijuana (cannabinoids). The National MS Society, in a recent expert opinion paper, acknowledges "that cannabinoids have potential...for the management of MS symptoms such as pain and spasticity" and that "there are sufficient data available to suggest that cannabinoids may have neuroprotective effects." <http://www.nationalmssociety.org/about-multiple-sclerosis/treatments/complementary--alternative-medicine/marijuana/download.aspx?id=1023>

Yet the National MS Society "cannot at this time recommend that medical marijuana be made widely available to people with MS for symptom management," partly because of "existing legal barriers to its use." In that regard, CMMNJ believes that the National MS society might better serve its members by

joining numerous other organizations that are calling for the legalization of medical marijuana.

The National MS Society also says, "Studies to date do not demonstrate a clear benefit compared to existing symptomatic therapies." The National MS Society might wish to consider the following benefits of marijuana therapy: Marijuana can be grown at home for pennies, it is easy for patients to self-titrate, and no fatal overdoses have ever been associated with its use. Nor should cannabinoids have to demonstrate that they are clearly superior to other therapies. No other drug is held to that standard. Cannabinoids should only have to demonstrate that they are safe and effective.

The National MS Society is also concerned that "issues of side effects, systemic effects, and long-term effects are not yet clear." Yet on Sept. 6, 1988, Judge Francis L. Young, after studying the issue for two years, ruled favorably on the issue of medical marijuana  
<http://www.druglibrary.org/olsen/medical/young/young4.html>

Judge Young said, "The evidence in this record clearly shows that marijuana has been accepted as capable of relieving the distress of great numbers of very ill people, and doing so with safety under medical supervision. It would be unreasonable, arbitrary and capricious for DEA to continue to stand between those sufferers in light of the evidence in this record."

The Administrator of the DEA overturned Judge Young's ruling and the DEA continues to this day to obstruct access to and research on medical marijuana.  
<http://www.maps.org/mmj/DEAlawsuit.html>

CMMNJ urges the MS Society to join the countless health care professionals and organizations that support immediate, safe and legal access to medical marijuana. MS patients throughout the country would be very grateful for your support.

Ken Wolski, RN, MPA  
Executive Director  
Coalition for Medical Marijuana--New Jersey, Inc.  
<http://www.cmmnj.org/>

Posted by: ohamkrw | August 30, 2010 8:12 PM | [Report abuse](#)

---

The real joke, hoax, charade, farce is the 7+ decades-old, tired and worn out "Big Cannabis Lie," which has been thoroughly refuted by historical and scientific fact. At this point, only the ignorant and paid liars would call using cannabis medicinally a "joke."

Problem is, as the American College of Physicians put it, there is a "CLEAR DISCORD" between the scientific and medical community and the regulatory community over the medicinal value, which impedes cannabis research and blocks patient access to an ancient herbal remedy that cannot kill from toxicity and has an incredible therapeutic versatility.

Cannabis has been a treasured part of humanity's medicine chest for millena. Cannabis medicines -- especially cannabis tinctures made by pharmaceutical giants, like Merck, ParkeDavis, Eli Lilly -- were widely prescribed in the U.S. for a wide array of conditions and symptoms from the mid-1800s until 1942, when the "Marihuana Tax Act of 1937" was passed -- despite strong objections made by the American Medical Association submitted on record to Congress.

And as other commenters have pointed out, there are many other delivery methods for cannabis, besides smoking, including vaporization, which provides immediate relief from symptoms without the dangers associated with smoking. And you can make all sorts of baked goods and other edibles, and you can even make pills from cannabis, with all of cannabis's healing components, not just fake THC, like Marinol.

To help tease fact from regulatory agency propaganda or fiction, here's a link or web address to the American College of Physicians (ACP) position paper on medical cannabis (the scientifically correct term for Marijuana/Marihuana), "Supporting Research into the Therapeutic Role of Marijuana," released in February 2008:

[http://www.acponline.org/acp\\_news/medmarinews.htm](http://www.acponline.org/acp_news/medmarinews.htm)

The American College of Physicians is the largest medical specialty organization group in the United States, representing 124,000 members specializing in internal medicine and related subspecialties, including cardiology, neurology, pulmonary disease, oncology and infectious diseases.

The ACP publishes "Annals of Internal Medicine", the most widely cited medical specialty journal in the world. I'm listening to the real experts like the ACP, not to professional liars blocking access to one of the safest substances known to man.

Posted by: AncientMedicine | August 30, 2010 8:23 PM | [Report abuse](#)

---

Wow, you believe everything the MS Society tells you? The MS Societies endorse Sativex in other countries, which is made of... yes, two strong kinds of marijuana. It cost \$16.00 a day to take Sativex. It cost \$0.10 a day to vaporize the tenth of a gram of cannabis necessary to get relief from my spasms and pain, or use the tincture in my coffee that makes it possible to get through my day.

No medical users smoke cannabis - they are too concerned with their health to do something so obviously counter-productive. Vaporize or tincture. It's easier to

control the dosing.

I have Secondary progressive, relapsing-remitting MS (dx 1996, age 53, married, 3 grown kids, use scooter outside home)and cannot go for walks without using cannabis. Yes, I've tried Baclofen and Zanaflex until I can't stay concious. Havign a catheter inserted into my spine does not appeal to me, so this is the next, logical step.

Cannabis relieves my spasticity and improves my walking to the point that I do not need my forearm crutch to walk, and can walk more normally for almost a mile/day. And of course all the hurting places that I spend so much energy ignoring all day, everyday, are GONE after using a small amount of cannabis.

As a former RN, I KNOW that moving is good for the whole body, not just MS. I know that drugs stronger than tylenol and aspirin are bad for the body. I do not seek to get "high", and in fact, do not get high with the doses I use.

Everything you thought you knew about marijuana is wrong. It does matter what kind of cannabis you use - each strain is different. You don't giggle, or act stupid (unless you use waaay too much - which is what thrill-seeking teens do with it) - my S.O. doesn't even know when I have vaped - I have to tell him.

This "drug" has been used for thousands of years to treat pain and all kinds of things. Get educated and preferably, not through the MS Society - they have such a narrow scientific and world view.

I think your kids would respect your ability to use your own intellect to decide what is best for you. Don't count on the MS Society for that - they're are so deeply under the covers with the drug companies, it's not even funny. I'm sure they mean well, but after all, THEY don't have MS, you do!

Posted by: maureenshanahan | August 30, 2010 8:28 PM | [Report abuse](#)

---

Dear Journo: Problem with Person with low degree of illness ,Is that Insurance gives Medical Illness specific time or Calander Date of Treatment, then often, worst happens.Even if Patient has little Illness & recovered, Just seeking Medicene & cost associated, Is Reason. often those dates are 4 months in servre case. Sometimes, yet rare, up to 8 years, then just Bag IT, as NO More resources for beneficiary, In Spite of Improvement.

Marihuana will cure NO ONE of ANYTHING, Worse, Risk OWN Life & Final Treatment on Vivisection Table, AS YOUR Final Endpoint, often much sooner than Expected.

For MS, Excercise, like athlete with sore muscles after strain, or going out to ski for first time, next day is incredibly Painful, perhaps Not even able to Walk, temporarily. There too, Best Relief Is To Go Right Out Exercise Body Some More. Washing out Toxins that are causing suffering. Strenghting Nerves & Muscles ,making less prone to painful, binding, often associated with build up of acetyl compounds In Muscle Fabric or deeper tar like leporsy,Looseing, that is Irratating underlying muscle structure, with own waste toxin build up.

Walk & wash. Hot Baths helps ,too. Meta Muscil name almost states good exit point for dis ease.

Signed:PHYSICIAN THOMAS STEWART von DRASHEK M.D.

Posted by: thomasxstewart1 | August 30, 2010 8:40 PM | [Report abuse](#)

---

Here is a link to a great overview on Multiple Sclerosis and Cannabis (history, research, legal, etc...) from Americans for Safe Access, to help tease medical fact from regulatory agency medical distortion:

<http://www.safeaccessnow.org/article.php?id=4558>

"The anti-marijuana campaign is a cancerous tissue of lies, undermining law enforcement, aggravating the drug problem, DEPRIVING THE SICK OF NEEDED HELP [caps added], and suckering well-intentioned conservatives and countless frightened parents... Narcotics police are an enormous, corrupt international bureaucracy ... and now fund a coterie of researchers who provide them with 'scientific support' ... fanatics who distort the legitimate research of others."

-- William F. Buckley, Commentary in The National Review, April 29, 1983, p. 495

Posted by: AncientMedicine | August 31, 2010 1:59 PM | [Report abuse](#)

---

I am 38 years old and have been self employed since I was 18 years old. In 2001 I had a neck injury from horseback riding which led to multiple surguries and never ending pain. I have pain from the second I wake up to unbearable pain every day and my breakfast is pain killers which takes the pain to bearable levels. I live the horrible life of being married to pain killers, they affect my mood, my ability to work, and the worst part is I don't even remember what I'm like not on pain killers. Some days even if I'm not in terrible pain and don't want to take the pain killers I don't have a choice because my body is addicted and needs them. It's a life I wouldn't wish upon anyone. In 2006 I broke down and decided to try marijuana to relieve my pain at night since I don't have to work or drive and to my surprise not only does it releieve my pain I suddenly don't feel angry, grumpy, explosive, when I'm medicated with marijuana and more importantly I don't have to take any pain pills while the marijuana is doing it's job. It has helped me reduce the high consumption of pain killers saving my liver from damage caused by high tylenol intake and allowed me to have a better relationship with my family.

I have never heard of an angry person while medicated on marijuana and personally believe legalization would be better than the alternative which is alcohol.

Posted by: Dan69 | August 31, 2010 2:18 PM | [Report abuse](#)

---

Hon, may I help you in your quest for knowledge? I want you to run a single search search for "Granny Storm Crow's MMJ Reference List - July 2010" and read the sections that interest you. It is posted up, as a free educational resource, at a few selected forums.

I just listed the titles and links to the studies, not the studies themselves, and put them into categories. So far, I have gathered 420 pages of links to PubMed, medical journals, layman's sites like WebMD, and news articles about the medical studies. Eight full pages are devoted to links to MS studies and articles. "Spasticity", "pain" and "Cancer - lung" also their own pages-long sections.

I want you to learn for yourself from the actual studies what cannabis can do. Don't rely on others to do your thinking! Don't even take my word- you need to read the actual studies and make up your own mind using the medical facts to guide you! Educate yourself! Thank you.

Posted by: StormCrow1 | September 1, 2010 2:39 PM | [Report abuse](#)

---

Hon, may I help you in your quest for knowledge? I want you to run a single search search for "Granny Storm Crow's MMJ Reference List - July 2010" and read the sections that interest you. It is posted up, as a free educational resource, at a few selected forums.

I just listed the titles and links to the studies, not the studies themselves, and put them into categories. So far, I have gathered 420 pages of links to PubMed, medical journals, layman's sites like WebMD, and news articles about the medical studies. Eight full pages are devoted to links to MS studies and articles. "Spasticity", "pain" and "Cancer - lung" also their own pages-long sections.

I want you to learn for yourself from the actual studies what cannabis can do. Don't rely on others to do your thinking! Don't even take my word- you need to read the actual studies and make up your own mind using the medical facts to guide you! Educate yourself! Thank you.

Posted by: StormCrow1 | September 1, 2010 2:45 PM | [Report abuse](#)

---

Sorry for the double post- got an error message and re-posted!

Posted by: StormCrow1 | September 1, 2010 2:52 PM | [Report abuse](#)

---

#### Post a Comment

We encourage users to analyze, comment on and even challenge washingtonpost.com's articles, blogs, reviews and multimedia features.

User reviews and comments that include profanity or personal attacks or other inappropriate comments or material will be removed from the site. Additionally, entries that are unsigned or contain "signatures" by someone other than the actual author will be removed. Finally, we will take steps to block users who violate any of our posting standards, terms of use or privacy policies or any other policies governing this site. Please review the [full rules](#) governing commentaries and discussions.

#### Comments:

3000 characters remaining