



# Cannabis and HIV/AIDS:

## 5. Where to Find Cannabis for Medicinal Purposes

### Included in this series of fact sheets on Cannabis and HIV/AIDS:

1. The Medicinal Use of Cannabis
2. How to Apply to Use Medicinal Cannabis Legally
3. How to Speak to your Doctor about Medicinal Cannabis
4. Information Sheet for Physicians
5. Where to Find Cannabis for Medicinal Purposes
6. A Few Tips for Safer Use and Better Health
7. Cooking with Cannabis
8. Tips for Growing Cannabis Safely
9. How to Deal with the Stigma and Discrimination of Cannabis Use

### Where to Get Cannabis Legally:

In order to legally possess cannabis for medicinal purposes, you must first obtain an Authorization to Possess from Health Canada. Please refer to the fact sheet on “How to Apply to Use Medicinal Cannabis Legally”. When you apply for your authorization, you have 3 legal options from which you can obtain cannabis:

- You can buy the cannabis produced under contract for the government. has some seeds available to get you started.
- You can apply for a license to produce your own cannabis. The government
- You can designate someone to grow cannabis for you and only you.

### Contact Information:

These fact sheets have been prepared by the Canadian AIDS Society, in consultation with a National Steering Committee and a Legal Consultant. They are easily photocopied. We encourage you to distribute them widely.

For updates on these fact sheets, or for more information, please visit our web site at <[www.cdnaids.ca/cannabis](http://www.cdnaids.ca/cannabis)> or contact us at:

Canadian AIDS Society  
190 O'Connor Street, Suite 800  
Ottawa ON, Canada, K2P 2R3

Tel: 1-613-230-3580  
Toll free: 1-800-499-1986

### The Government's Cannabis

The cannabis produced for the government has received significant attention in the media and you may have heard some negative criticism about it.

The government has made some changes to address these concerns and the product has improved better. It is tested to ensure that it is not contaminated, unlike cannabis that is available on the street. It is also gamma-irradiated to ensure that it does not contain any harmful mould spores. It is sold for \$5 a gram, plus

GST. You can order up to one month's supply at a time. It is delivered to your door or to your doctor's office. Your best bet is to give it a try to determine whether it works for you. Please refer to the fact sheet on “How to Apply to Use Medicinal Cannabis Legally” for more information.



## Licenses to Produce

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Whether you apply for a license to produce or designate someone to grow for you, the number of plants you or your designated grower are allowed to grow is determined by the daily dose that you require.

This information is required on your application for an authorization. You or your designated grower will need to follow the guidelines set out in

the *Marihuana Medical Access Regulations*. Please refer to the fact sheet on “How to Apply to Use Medicinal Cannabis Legally” for more details.

## Compassion Clubs and Cannabis Clubs

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In Canada, there are clubs that provide a variety of strains of cannabis, as well as other cannabis products such as baked goods and other edibles, tinctures, oils, concentrates, capsules, and sprays, as well as organic<sup>1</sup> (not certified) cannabis.

These clubs are referred to as compassion clubs, cannabis clubs, or buyers’ clubs. They vary in size, organizational structure and the services they provide. Some clubs are very well established and are registered as not-for-profit societies. **It is important for you to know that the clubs are NOT LEGAL in Canada.** Their status and their potential role in the distribution of medicinal cannabis are still being debated. They are NOT part of the federal medical cannabis program. This is NOT a legal source of cannabis. The people who run clubs are usually quite knowledgeable about the use of

cannabis for medicinal purposes. Some clubs have developed standards of operations by which they self-regulate, though at this time there are no uniform standards by which all clubs operate. These clubs usually require membership, which you obtain by filling out a quick form to fill out and getting your doctor to sign it, or providing a letter from your doctor to confirm your diagnosis. There are not many clubs and providers in Canada. We are providing a list for your information. Please visit our web site at <[www.cdnaids.ca/cannabis](http://www.cdnaids.ca/cannabis)> for an updated list.

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<sup>1</sup> *A note on organic cannabis: Some of you may be seeking an organic source of cannabis. Currently there is no certified organic cannabis available to authorized persons in Canada. The government’s cannabis is gamma-irradiated for safety purposes, to ensure no harmful mould spores are present. Under national standards for organic agriculture, irradiation is not permitted. Compassion clubs often offer organic cannabis as an available product, though this cannabis is not certified as organic. There is one exception. Island Harvest in BC produces organic cannabis which is certified by the province of British Columbia. However due to Health Canada’s regulations, Island Harvest’s certified organic cannabis is only available to two authorized people, as restricted under the MMAR.*

**British Columbia Compassion Club Society**

Vancouver, British Columbia

Tel : (604) 875-0448

E-mail: <info@thecompassionclub.org>

Web site: <www.thecompassionclub.org>

**Cannabis As Living Medicine (C.A.L.M.)**

Toronto, Ontario

Tel: (416) 367-3459

E-mail: <info@cannabisclub.ca>

Web site: <www.cannabisclub.ca>

**Cannabis Buyers' Club of Canada**

Victoria and Coombs, British Columbia

Halifax, Nova Scotia

Tel: (250) 381-4220 on the west coast

(902) 497-3941 on the east coast

E-mail: <normlms@hotmail.com>

Web site: <www.cbc-canada.com>

**Cannabis Common Inc.**

Toronto, Ontario

Tel: (416) 400-3134

E-mail: <cannabiscommon@sympatico.ca>

E-mail: <cannabiscommoninc@hotmail.com>

Web site: <www.toronto420.com/cc>

**Island Harvest – BC Certified Organic Medical Cannabis**

Vancouver Island, British Columbia

Tel: (250) 748-8614

E-mail: <info@medicalmarihuana.ca>

Web Site: <www.islandharvest.ca>

**Montreal Cannabis Club**

Montreal, Quebec

Tel: (514) 521-8764

Fax: (514) 845-0263

E-mail: <contact@marijuanahomedelivery.ca>

Web site: <www.clubcompassion.org>

**Hemp Users Medical Access Network**

Toronto, Ontario

Tel: (416) 253-1021

Fax: (416) 253-1428

E-mail: <info@humanhemphealth.ca>

Web site: <www.humanhemphealth.ca>

**London Compassion Society**

London, Ontario

Tel: (519) 850-5221

E-mail: <info@londoncompassionsociety.com>

Web site: <www.londoncompassionsociety.com>

**Marijuana Home Delivery**

Montreal, Quebec

Tel: (514) 521-8764

Fax: (514) 845-0263

E-mail: <contact@marijuanahomedelivery.ca>

Web site: <www.marijuanahomedelivery.ca>

**The Mid-Island Compassion Club**

Vancouver Island, British Columbia

Tel: (250) 954-0363

E-Mail: <MidIslandCompassionClub@Shaw.ca>

Web site: <www.Members.Shaw.ca/MidIslandCompassionClub>

**Mobile Access Compassionate Resources Organization Society**

(M.A.C.R.O.S.)

Edmonton, Alberta

Tel: (780) 457-6824

E-mail: <admin@macros.ca>

Web site: <www.macros.ca>

**Nelson Cannabis Compassion Club**

Nelson, British Columbia

Tel: (250) 354-4206

E-mail: <nelsoncompassion@yahoo.ca>

Web site: <www.community.netidea.com/compassionclub>

**Vancouver Island Compassion Society**

Victoria, British Columbia

Tel: (250) 381-8427

E-mail: <info@thevics.com>

Web site: <www.thevics.com>

**remarcable foods**

Vancouver British Columbia

Tel: (604) 721-7461

E-mail: <info@remarcable.ca>

Web site: <www.remarcable.ca>

**Toronto Compassion Centre**

Toronto, Ontario

Tel: (416) 668-6337

E-mail: <postmaster@torontocompassioncentre.org>

Web site: <www.tccentre.org>

**Treating Yourself.Com Inc.**

Canada

E-mail: <weedmaster@treatingyourself.com>

Web site: <www.treatingyourself.com>

## Friends or Someone You Know

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Many people tell us they get their cannabis from friends or someone they know.

There are some advantages to doing this, as this may be someone they trust and have developed a relationship with, and who may also provide more information about how the cannabis is grown. Of course, getting cannabis from an unlicensed

producer is illegal. Discretion is a must in this situation in order to protect both yourself and the person who is supplying you. Once again, there are no controls over the quality of these products.

## Street Dealers

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Sometimes the only way you may find cannabis is through a street dealer or through “a friend of a friend”.

There are inherent risks with getting your cannabis from a dealer. You don't really know what you are getting, where the cannabis comes from, or how it was grown and harvested. Dealers can also be unreliable or disappear if they run into trouble,

leaving you to search for another one. There may also be risks to your personal safety when dealing with a street dealer, especially if a deal goes bad, or if you are in the wrong place at the wrong time. You may also face arrest if caught during a transaction.

## A Few Safety Tips to Protect Yourself and Your Health

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- **Know your source:** It is a good idea to find out about your source of cannabis and ask questions about what you are getting. Do you trust the source? Are they reliable? Do you know how the cannabis is being grown? Are they using pesticides? Chemicals? Use your judgment. Some people may not want to provide too much information, or may not know the answers to your questions.
- **Be Discreet:** The fewer people who know you have cannabis around, the less likely you are to attract unwanted attention from others seeking cannabis or from the police. This is especially important if you are growing cannabis.
- **Do not keep your cannabis, paraphernalia, plants or grow equipment in plain view of the doors or windows.**

## Tips on Storing Your Cannabis

THC, the main active ingredient in cannabis, is found in the glands or “trichomes”, attached to the surface of the leaves, stems and buds of the plant. You can visibly see the trichomes, which give cannabis that frosty look. THC deteriorates when it is exposed to light, oxygen and heat.

- **Ensure that the cannabis is properly dried before storing it.** Storing wet or damp cannabis will encourage the growth of moulds, fungi and bacteria, which could result in serious health problems. There should not be any condensation on the inside of your container. If there is, dry out the cannabis in a paper bag for another day or two before storing it, just to make sure.
- **Store your cannabis in a wood, hard plastic or metal container, in a cool and dark place.**
- **You can refrigerate or freeze cannabis in a sealed container to slow down its deterioration.** For long-term storage, place the cannabis in a Mason jar, a sealed glass jar or a vacuum-sealed bag or container in the freezer.
- **NEVER EVER smoke mouldy weed!** If you see the presence of white, greyish, black or blue-green sometimes fuzzy looking moulds on your cannabis, throw it out, just as you would mouldy food. Please refer to the fact sheet on “The Medicinal Use of Cannabis” for more information.



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