

# WHY MARIJUANA IS NOT LEGALLY MEDICINE



The word medicine is defined as “a substance, especially a drug, used to treat the signs and symptoms of a disease, condition, or injury.” (1) In Kentucky it will be legal to use medicinal marijuana as of January 1, 2025. However, just because marijuana can be used medicinally, that does not make it medicine.

In the United States, drugs, including prescription and non-prescription (over-the-counter) drugs, are regulated by Food and Drug Administration (FDA). FDA review teams (comprised of medical doctors, chemists, microbiologists, and others) are charged with evaluating whether the benefits of a drug outweigh the risks before approving it as medicine. (2)

While there is ongoing research into the potential pain-relieving properties of the marijuana plant, marijuana has not been rigorously researched for effectiveness, side effects, and interactions. It has also not yet gone through clinical trials, quality controls, standardized composition, and uniform dosing specificity. It is not distributed within regulated pharmaceutical channels. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it is not approved as medicine by the FDA. (2)

## If not medicine, what is Marijuana/Cannabis?

Marijuana is the dried flowers, leaves, seeds, and stems of the cannabis plant. It contains more than 100 compounds, including THC, an impairing and mind-altering compound. Marijuana is used recreationally as well as therapeutically for certain conditions. (3)

The FDA has approved 1 plant-based cannabis drug and 2 synthetic cannabis medications for medical use:

- Epidiolex
- Dronabinol [brand names: (Marinol and Syndros)]
- Nabilone (brand name: Cesamet) (3)

The term medical marijuana/cannabis refers to the entire plant and cannot be distinguished from non-medical marijuana.

Marijuana for medical purposes should be subject to the same research, consideration and study as any other potential medicines by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

### Sources

1 <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/modern+medicine>

2 <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/information-consumers-and-patients-drugs/fdas-drug-review-process-ensuring-drugs-are-safe-and-effective>

3 [https://www.cdc.gov/cannabis/about/index.html?](https://www.cdc.gov/cannabis/about/index.html?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/marijuana/faqs/what-is-marijuana.html)

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