

5/11/2020

Oregon Cannabis Commission - COVID-19

The State of Medical Cannabis

COVID-19 has disrupted the lives of all Oregonians. This has been especially true for our most vulnerable populations which include patients who use and rely on cannabis as medicine to treat pre-existing conditions.

For these patients, cannabis is essential, and the Oregon Cannabis Commission extends our appreciation to Governor Brown for keeping cannabis businesses operational, recognizing the essential nature of cannabis in the lives of patients and the importance of ensuring cannabis remains accessible throughout the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. By keeping OLCC retail stores operational, we can be assured that the continued needs will be met by the growing number of Oregonians who also use cannabis for medical reasons but are not a part of the OMMP cardholder program.

To ensure continued safe access to cannabis for our patients, emphasis must be placed on clearly communicating precautionary guidance around cannabis use in general. The Oregon Cannabis Commission looks forward to working collaboratively with the Oregon Health Authority and the Oregon Liquor Control Commission in developing an evidence-based guide for the use of cannabis during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. Information is widely available to facilitate establishing clear guidelines for all user types, and the Oregon Cannabis Commission will work with the OHA and OLCC to create these guidelines for healthy individuals and those with preexisting medical conditions.

While we don't have all the clinical and epidemiological information on cannabis and COVID-19, we recommend keeping the following in mind when using cannabis:

### **Information for patients**

- Follow OHA guidelines when applying for and renewing an OMMP card. If possible please use the [Oregon Medical Marijuana Online System](#) (OMMOS) to apply for a card and pay online through the fee payment system.
- Contact your doctor to see if they offer telemedicine for appointments to obtain your card.
- The OLCC has raised the daily purchase limit to 24 ounces for medical card holders and caregivers, but the 32-ounce monthly limit remains in place.

## **Guidelines to limit the risk of COVID-19 infection while using cannabis (marijuana)**

- Try to stop or limit smoking or vaping at this time. Smokers of both cigarettes and cannabis are at a higher risk for severe COVID-19 infections. The hand-to-mouth action of smoking and vaping has been shown to be a primary means of transmitting the virus. Smoking can also damage the protective mechanisms of the airways, increasing the risk of infection.
- Instead of smoking or vaping, you can use marijuana tinctures, topicals, patches, edibles or suppositories.
- Don't share joints, pipes, vape pens, bongs, dab rigs or other paraphernalia that may increase the risk of transmitting COVID-19 from one person to another.
- Avoid using cannabis if you are sick with any symptoms that affect your breathing. There is some evidence that using cannabis while sick may interfere with your body's ability to fight off the virus.
- Consider wearing a cloth face covering when visiting a retail outlet to purchase marijuana. Remember personal protective equipment (PPE) should be reserved for healthcare providers.
- Calling ahead to determine what the retail store requirements are for protection and how they are maintaining physical distancing in their transactions.

## **Information for caregivers**

Exercise the following precautions when administering cannabis to patients:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially before administering medication, and after:
  - Blowing your nose
  - Coughing or sneezing
  - Being in a public place
- If you cannot use soap and water, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Avoid touching your face, nose and eyes.
- When possible, avoid touching high-touch surfaces in public places. Some examples are elevator buttons, door handles, handrails and shaking hands with people. Use a tissue or your sleeve to cover your hand or finger if you must touch something.
- More information on how to stay safe while caring for someone else is available on the [OHA website](#).

## **Information for growers**

- Limit your contact with the public.
- Always maintain at least 6 feet of distance from others when possible.
- Use the [OMMOS](#) system for registering as a grower or paying fees.

- Clean and disinfect your facility often using [CDC guidance](#). for cleaning and disinfecting your facility.
- Take precautions when transferring products and obtaining signatures for manifests by using physical distancing of at least 6 feet.

**Information for providers**

Resources on COVID-19 available on the OHA website at the following links:

- [OMMP News](#)
- [OMMP Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) FAQs](#)
- Information on using telemedicine is available on the [Oregon Medical Board website](#).

Sincerely,  
Oregon Cannabis Commission