

**3** CBD  
for Sleep

**6** 9 best Foods to  
Boost Your Brain  
and Memory



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## **What to Know About CBD Oil for Elderly**

**C**BD is a chemical found in marijuana. CBD doesn't contain the ingredient that produces a high, which is known as tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). Typically CBD is available as an oil, but CBD is also sold as an extract, a vaporized liquid, and an oil-based capsule. Numerous CBD-infused food, drink, and beauty products are available online.

Many people use CBD oil to curb symptoms of many common health issues, including some elderly people. According to a 2020 nationally representative Consumer Reports survey, 20% of Americans 65 years and older said they'd tried CBD oil, up from 14% from the prior year in 2019. However, it's important to keep in mind what conditions CBD

oil can help and whether it's safe for the elderly to use.

### **Is CBD Oil Effective?**

Each of us has something called an endocannabinoid system. The endocannabinoid system works to keep you in a stable condition where everything in your body works at its best. For instance, if it is hot outside or if you are exercising vigorously, your endocannabinoid system will help steady your heart rate and keep your body temperature within a healthy range by making you sweat.

Your body works best when everything is balanced, and your endocannabinoid system helps maintain that balance, despite what might be going on in your

external environment.

When something is out of balance, like an inflamed joint due to arthritis or injury, CBD oil helps support your endocannabinoid system so your body can better handle and relieve the problem.

### Is CBD Oil Safe for Seniors?

We need more research, but CBD oil seems to be an up-and-coming treatment solution for the elderly.

While CBD and THC are both found as parts of the cannabis plant, significantly higher THC amounts are found in marijuana. Some seniors might be prescribed medical marijuana by their doctor, although medical marijuana is not legal in every state, and some people don't want to experience a "high."

CBD doesn't produce a high, and it's legal throughout the United States. It's sourced from a hemp strain of cannabis and contains .3% THC or less. This means you get all of the benefits without having to worry about feeling high.

### Benefits of CBD Oil

There are numerous benefits of CBD oil:

- Relieves arthritis pain
- Relieves chronic pain
- Reduces inflammation
- Reduces muscle spasms
- Improves sleep
- Prevents or reduces symptoms related to Alzheimer's disease
- May reduce cancer cell growth
- Reduces nausea and vomiting for cancer patients being treated with chemotherapy

**Pain relief.** CBD oil has also proven to be an effective, non-habit-forming treatment for pain. One study found that CBD reduces pain 30% more than traditional medication or medical marijuana (THC) alone.

**General anxiety and performance anxiety.** One study of individuals with a social anxiety disorder and fear of public speaking gave some people a single dose of CBD an hour and a half before they participated in public speaking. Those given the CBD experienced a significant reduction in their anxiety, with less discomfort and stress.

In short, CBD has been proven effective in enhancing the quality of life, preventing cognitive decline, reducing blood pressure in stressful situations, and more.

### What to Consider When Buying CBD

**Decide why and what form.** Think about what you'll be using CBD for and how you'd prefer to use it. CBD is often available as an oil, pill, drop or lotion.

**Consider the amount of THC.** Some CBD products contain THC, although it's in very small amounts. If you're looking for CBD with no TCH in it at all, consider looking for CBD made from hemp.

**Find where it was made.** Not all CBD products are made the same way. Colorado has very robust, trusted CBD manufacturing facilities, but if you buy CBD online and it comes from somewhere overseas, it may not have gone through any safety testing.

**Read the label.** Always read the label of any CBD product to check for additional ingredients that could affect your health or safety.

**Stay cautious.** Some CBD brands will make claims that CBD can cure cancer or help with heart disease. Huge health claims like that are illegal and are not verified. If a brand is advertising unrealistic benefits, beware.

### Risks of CBD Oil

Currently, the only CBD product approved by the Food and Drug Administration is a prescription oil called Epidiolex used to treat epilepsy. Although CBD is currently being studied as a potential treatment for other conditions like Parkinson's disease, schizophrenia, multiple sclerosis, and diabetes, the research is limited.

Because CBD is mostly available as an unregulated supplement, it is challenging to pinpoint effective doses or know exactly what you're getting. For this reason, it's important to talk with your doctor before taking CBD.

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*Written by WebMD Editorial Contributors  
Reviewed by Carmelita Swiner, MD on  
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## CBD for Sleep: How it Works, Benefits and Risks

If you're desperate for quality sleep, you're not alone: About 70 million U.S. adults suffer from chronic sleep problems, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

While vast resources are available to help improve sleep—from supplements and medications to sleep coaches and high-tech gadgets—researchers are considering cannabidiol (CBD) as an alternative.

Keep reading to learn what science has to say about CBD and the potential benefits and risks of using CBD for sleep.

### The Endocannabinoid System and Sleep

Understanding the endocannabinoid system (ECS) is essential to understanding the effect CBD may have on sleep. The word “cannabinoid,” contained within the name of the system, refers to the active constituents of the cannabis sativa plant that impact the ECS.

“The endocannabinoid system is a complex neurochemical network in the body that regulates various bodily functions, including emotions, pain and sleep,” says Chantel Strachan, M.D., a board-certified internal medicine physician and

headache specialist at Columbia Doctors and Columbia University Irving Medical Center in New York. While the body naturally releases endocannabinoid molecules, external sources of cannabinoids, such as CBD, can affect the body via the ECS, she adds.

The hypothalamus—which plays a significant role in the ECS—impacts sleep regulation, says Daniel Whitelocke, M.D., owner and CEO of Ozark MMJ Cards, an Arkansas service that helps qualified patients obtain medical marijuana cards. “The hypothalamus, a peanut-sized structure buried deep in the brain, is enriched with cannabinoid receptors and governs the circadian rhythm of our sleep-wake cycle,” he says. Circadian rhythms are 24-hour cycles that, among other functions, help our bodies fall asleep at night and wake up in the morning, and research suggests the ECS factors into that cycle.

### How Can CBD Benefit Sleep?

CBD is the second most abundant compound in the cannabis sativa plant, and many studies suggest it may indirectly benefit sleep. In fact, CBD—which doesn't cause the intoxicatingly psychoactive “high” associated with delta-9

tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)—might help people with different sleep disorders, including insomnia and restless leg syndrome, as well as other conditions known to negatively impact sleep, according to research.

For instance, CBD may help people relax by easing anxiety and pain, two factors that may make it difficult for someone to fall or stay asleep, says Dr. Strachan.

**Insomnia** The hypothalamus plays a role in several sleep-related functions, including regulating body temperature and synchronizing sleep patterns. CBD can help people with insomnia because it works with the hypothalamus to regulate stress, says Dr. Whitelocke. “Insomnia results from an overactive stress reaction that’s spilling into a rest time when we’re not trying to process conscious trauma,” he adds. “CBD can suppress this dysregulated cycle of stress hormone overactivation and equalize the sleep and wake rhythm through counteracting hormones.”

In a study examining the effects of cannabis on insomnia, researchers found CBD more effectively decreased symptoms of insomnia than delta-9 THC, which is the most abundant active constituent in the cannabis sativa plant that has an intoxicatingly psychoactive effect.

**Circadian Rhythm Disorders**

Circadian rhythm disorders, also known as sleep-wake cycle disorders, occur when the body’s internal clock, which dictates when you fall asleep and when you wake up, is misaligned with your environment. Circadian rhythm disorders can develop when there are changes in sleep habits, often due to travel or work, or as a by-product of a medical condition, aging or genetics.

CBD may improve both the quality and quantity of sleep by ensuring the body progresses through the normal stages of sleep and REM sleep without undue interruption, which would help people with circadian rhythm disorders, says Dr. Whitelocke. “CBD’s action on cannabinoid receptors initiates a cascade of events that culminates in a more natural timing of sleep relative to the diurnal rhythm of night and day,” he explains. However,

more research is needed.

CBD can be especially helpful for people like nurses who experience circadian rhythm disorders due to shift work, where sleep windows change depending on a person’s work schedule.

**Anxiety** Many studies have found CBD to be a potential treatment for anxiety disorders. While more research is needed, studies link CBD use to improved sleep due to its ability to decrease anxiety.

“CBD’s well-established role in reducing anxiety—without causing stony lethargy that can accompany THC products—makes it an ideal tool to calm intrusive thoughts before laying down to sleep,” says Dr. Whitelocke. More specifically, CBD acts on the endocannabinoid receptors in the limbic system—a set of brain regions known to play a role in many important functions, including the regulation of emotions, storage of memories, sexual arousal, olfaction (or our sense of smell) and forming of learning patterns. When the limbic system is out of equilibrium, such as when an intrusive memory leads to anxiety and insomnia, CBD activates the ECS to help repress that memory and, consequently, facilitate sleep. “By restoring hormone balance,” says Dr. Whitelocke, “CBD acts as the great equalizer.”

**Restless Leg Syndrome**

CBD may treat restless leg syndrome (RLS), a neurological condition that can affect sleep quality and quantity by causing an unpleasant and uncontrollable urge to move the legs. Early research suggests CBD can reduce the frequency of abnormal nerve firings that lead to involuntary muscle twitching, which is the hallmark symptom of RLS, says Dr. Whitelocke. “For a person who is prone to waking as a result of limb movement in sleep, this can come as a great benefit,” he says.

Many preliminary findings connecting CBD use and improved RLS symptoms are based on patients’ self-reported experiences, and further research is needed to confirm CBD’s efficacy as a treatment method for RLS.

**Chronic Pain** Studies show CBD has promising pain-relief potential. Researchers find that by applying products with CBD oil to painful areas, study partici-

pants report reduced pain and swelling often associated with inflammation.

Dr. Whitelocke says that for people who cannot tolerate the intoxicating effects of THC, CBD—ingested or used topically—offers an alternative for analgesia (or pain relief). “With regards to sleep, having adequate pain control is crucial to being able to relax both body and mind without the worry of addictive or toxic effects of other analgesic alternatives,” he says.

### Potential Risks of Using CBD for Sleep

While Dr. Whitelocke and Dr. Strachen both say CBD is a low-risk intervention and drug interactions with CBD products are rare, it’s important to talk to your doctor before starting a CBD regimen, as it may increase liver enzymes in people who take medications metabolized by the liver.

Such medications include:

- Statins
- Anti-inflammatories (including ibuprofen and naproxen)
- Certain anti-hypertensive medications
- Blood thinners

Also, some research suggests that THC may cause sleep disturbances. Because many CBD products do contain THC, even at low levels, this is something to consider when speaking with your doctor.

### Legality

The 2018 Farm Bill made hemp-derived CBD products containing less than 0.3% THC by dry weight legal. However, ease of access to CBD varies depending on where you live. In some states, CBD is available to purchase and possess, but in others, CBD products are less accessible.

“CBD-containing products are increasingly available without a prescription,” says Dr. Strachen. “However, they are not regulated by the FDA for sleep.” While the FDA does attempt to monitor for companies illegally marketing and selling CBD, over-the-counter CBD products do not need to be FDA-approved.

“The best idea when purchasing a new CBD product is to do a thorough background check on the source,” says Dr. Whitelocke. “Checking the label for actual CBD content is a good idea, as well as en-

suring that the product was independently tested by a third-party laboratory for quality and purity.”

Many CBD products come with a certificate of analysis (COA), which guarantees that a third-party laboratory tested the product for accurate potency. The COA also ensures the product is free of harmful contaminants, including pesticides, molds and heavy metals.

### Should You Use CBD for Sleep?

Ultimately, the choice to use CBD for sleep is between you and your health care provider. Some reasons to consider CBD for sleep include wanting to try a plant-based option or seeking an alternative to conventional treatments that haven’t been effective, says Dr. Strachen.

CBD is a safe alternative to prescription sleep medications, adds Dr. Whitelocke. “Especially when you consider the relatively low toxicity of CBD products,” he says, “using CBD for sleep is a wise alternative for almost anybody seeking to improve the quality and quantity of restorative rest.”

You can find CBD in several delivery forms, including capsules, edibles, tinctures and topical products like patches, sprays, creams and more.

### Talking to Your Doctor About CBD Usage

“A person should always speak with their doctor before starting any CBD regimen,” says Dr. Strachen.

Similarly, Dr. Whitelocke says it’s important to keep your doctor in the loop regarding any treatments you undertake so they can advise you effectively based on your specific health concerns and other medications you use.

Forbes Health covers CBD and cannabis products in accordance with FTC guidelines. Learn more about Forbes Health’s practices and policies regarding how we cover CBD and cannabis as a publisher.

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## 9 Best Foods to Boost Your Brain and Memory

**F**oods that are good for your brain can help keep this crucial organ healthy and can improve your ability to do specific mental tasks, such as memory and concentration.

As the control center of your body, it's in charge of keeping your heart beating and lungs breathing and allowing you to move, feel, and think.

That's why eating certain foods can help you keep your brain in peak working condition.

**1. Fatty fish** When people talk about brain foods, fatty fish is often at the top of the list.

This type of fish includes salmon, trout, albacore tuna, herring, and sardines, all of which are rich sources of omega-3 fatty acids). About 60% of your brain is made of fat, and half of that fat is comprised of omega-3 fatty acids.

For one thing, they may slow age-related mental decline and help ward off Alzheimer's disease.

On the flip side, not getting enough omega-3s is linked to learning impairments, as well as depression.

**2. Coffee** Two main components in coffee — caffeine and antioxidants — can help support brain health and help with increased alertness and mood.

Drinking coffee over the long-term is

also linked to a reduced risk of neurological diseases, such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

**3. Blueberries** Blueberries provide numerous health benefits, including some that are specifically for your brain.

Blueberries and other deeply colored berries deliver anthocyanins, a group of plant compounds with anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects).

Antioxidants act against both oxidative stress and inflammation, conditions that can contribute to brain aging and neurodegenerative diseases.

Some of the antioxidants in blueberries have been found to accumulate in the brain and help improve communication between brain cells.

**4. Turmeric** This deep-yellow spice is a key ingredient in curry powder and has a number of benefits for the brain.

Curcumin, the active ingredient in turmeric, has been shown to cross the blood-brain barrier, meaning it can directly enter the brain and benefit the cells there.

It also may benefit memory and ease depression, while helping new brain cells grow. It may help delay age-related mental decline, but more research is needed.

**5. Broccoli**

Broccoli is packed with powerful plant compounds, including antioxidants.

It's also very high in vitamin K, delivering more than 100% of the Recommended Daily Intake (RDI) in a 1-cup.

This fat-soluble vitamin is essential for forming sphingolipids, a type of fat that's densely packed into brain cells.

**6. Pumpkin seeds** Pumpkin seeds contain powerful antioxidants that protect the body and brain from free-radical damage.

They're also an excellent source of magnesium, iron, zinc, and copper.

The research focuses mostly on these micronutrients, rather than pumpkin seeds themselves. However, since pumpkin seeds are high in these micronutrients, you can likely reap their benefits by adding pumpkin seeds to your diet.

**7. Dark chocolate** Dark chocolate and cocoa powder are packed with a few brain-boosting compounds, including flavonoids, caffeine, and antioxidants.

The flavonoids in chocolate gather in the areas of the brain that deal with learning and memory. Researchers believe that these compounds may enhance memory and also help slow down age-related mental decline.

Chocolate is also a legitimate mood booster, according to research.

**8. Nuts** Research has shown that eating nuts can improve heart-health markers, and having a healthy heart is linked to

having a healthy brain.

Several nutrients in nuts, such as healthy fats, antioxidants, and vitamin E, may explain their beneficial effects on brain health.

Furthermore, the B vitamins found in eggs also have several roles in brain health.

**9. Oranges** You can get almost all the vitamin C you need in a day by eating one medium orange.

Doing so is important for brain health since vitamin C is a key factor in preventing mental decline.

According to one study, having higher levels of vitamin C in the blood was associated with improvements in tasks involving focus, memory, attention, and decision speed.

### The bottom line

Many foods can help keep your brain healthy. Some foods, such as the fruits and vegetables in this list, as well as tea and coffee, have antioxidants that help protect your brain from damage.

Others, such as nuts and eggs, contain nutrients that support memory and brain development.

You can help support your brain health and boost your alertness, memory, and mood by strategically including these foods in your diet.

## EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

Independent You prides itself on having trained caregivers that are the best at what they do.

They are the cornerstone of our success as they treat our clients with compassion, empathy and respect. We truly value each of our caregivers.

We proudly recognize Vivian as **July's Caregiver of the Month**. Vivian goes above and beyond helping her clients have a better quality of life. She treats her clients as though they are family and not just another client. Vivian has a willingness to learn, take on challenges, and has grown to become one of our best caregivers. Vivian is always willing to accept shifts on short notice and never complains about having to do so. We thank Vivian for all her hard work since she joined our Independent You team in 2017. She is an asset to our company. Thank you, Vivian!





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