



Education

How To Sober Up When You Consume Too Much Cannabis

Want to stop being high? Here are some ways to sober up from weed or at least make the experience a little more tolerable.

By **Lauren Wilson** · Mar 14, 2019



Whether you're new to cannabis or an experienced consumer, there's always the potential risk for consuming too much.

Over consumption can be pretty unpleasant. Depending on how much you've consumed and your own physiology, effects might range from mild anxiety, to paranoia, to full-blown panic and fear. You might feel nauseous, light-headed or dizzy. Your heart might race, and you might feel completely overwhelmed.

But the first thing to know is **you cannot overdose on cannabis!** And the second thing to know is that there are some ways that you can take care of yourself to make the experience a little more tolerable.

What to do when you consume too much cannabis

When you're over-intoxicated, the mind might be racing, but it's important to remember that you're going to be OK. To calm the nervous system if you're feeling really distressed, take some deep breaths. Then try to get to a safe and comfortable place if you can. Actively remind yourself that you're safe and you're going to be fine.

Dr. Jordan Tishler, a Harvard-trained physician and cannabis expert at **inhaleMD**, recommends having a buddy with you if possible.

"If you have a partner or friend, having them sit with you or perhaps hold your hand can be remarkably grounding."

He also recommends gentle external stimulus and activity to get you out of your head and distracted from your internal state: relaxing music or watching a funny movie, for example.

"Most importantly, over intoxication tends to make people feel like it will never end. Actively remind yourself that it will end," says Tishler.

Many patients and consumers anecdotally report that consuming CBD helps when you have consumed too much THC. While **initial animal studies** have suggested that CBD might counter the intoxicating effects of THC, these results have **not been translated into human subjects**.

According to Dr. Tanny Raz, director of medical business development at **Apollo Cannabis Clinics**, CBD seems to offer relief because of its anti-anxiety benefits.

"Current studies indicate that CBD does not reduce THC's psychoactivity, however, many cannabis consumers have reported just the opposite, and we attribute this to the anti-anxiety properties of CBD," Raz says.

If you want to use CBD after consuming too much, make sure it's a product that has a **high CBD content**, and little to no THC.

While there are commercial products on the market claiming to sober you up or alleviate the symptoms of over-consuming, right now there is little to no science supporting these products — so consume them with caution. Tishler advises to avoid these products outright.

"Home remedies are also not particularly effective. One in particular, chewing peppercorns, is potentially lethal if you inhale peppercorn fragments, which could potentially close off your airway. Please don't do that," he adds.

How long the effects last also depends on how much you've consumed, how you consumed it, and your own body's physiology. According to Tishler, "inhaled cannabis will generally wear off in three to four hours. Orally ingested cannabis (edibles) can take much longer, eight to 12 hours. This, and the unpredictable time to onset of edibles, is why edibles are a common source of over-intoxication. Be especially cautious with edibles."

How to avoid consuming too much cannabis

The best way to avoid consuming too much THC is to follow the old adage of "start low and go slow." This means starting with a low dosage or consumption level: a one or two puffs from a joint or vaporizer, and a small portion of an edible, for example. Go slow means wait before consuming more: at least 15 minutes when inhaling and at least 90 minutes to two hours with an edible. This is especially true when you're consuming a strain or edible that is new to you.

Pay attention to the THC levels of the products you consume, so you can learn your own tolerance levels. For flower, low THC levels will be in and around 10% whereas high THC levels can clock in at upwards of 30%.

Terpenes can also affect your high, so seek out the terpene profiles of products and pay attention to how different profiles affect you. Many licensed producers now provide this information readily on their websites or on request.

For edibles, pay attention to the THC content of one serving. Many edibles start in and around 10 mg per portion, but these amounts can vary widely and you might not know the THC content of homemade edibles you haven't made yourself. Since **edibles are metabolized differently** by the body than when inhaling, they can produce much stronger effects. Start with a fraction of a portion until you know how you react to a particular batch or brand of edible.

"The best way to avoid getting too high is to know what you are taking, and to start low and go slow," says Dr. Raz.