

AS THE CANNABIS INDUSTRY GROWS, SO DO THE NUMBER OF NICHE EXPERTS WITHIN IT. FROM TOP-TIER DISPENSARIES AND EXTRACTION BRANDS TO EDIBLE MAKERS AND MARKETING SPECIALISTS, THESE COMPANIES ARE INCREDIBLE SOURCES OF INSIDER INFO ABOUT THE TRENDS AND ISSUES DRIVING THIS THRIVING MARKETPLACE FORWARD. THE SENSI ADVISORY BOARD IS COMPRISED OF LEADERS FROM A VARIETY OF FIELDS WITHIN THE CANNABIS INDUSTRY. EACH ISSUE, ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS SHARE SOME OF THEIR KNOWLEDGE WITH OUR READERS IN THIS DEDICATED SECTION. THIS MONTH, WE HEAR FROM THE EXPERTS AT **Lucid Mood** AND **Growfax 5**.

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CBD for Side-Effect-Free THC

by **Tristan J. Watkins, PhD, LucidMood**

THC ISN'T THE ONLY CANNABINOID FOUND IN CANNABIS. CANNABINOIDS ARE THE CHEMICAL COMPOUNDS SECRETED FROM THE CANNABIS FLOWER, AND THEY ALL HAVE DIFFERENT EFFECTS ON THE BRAIN AND BODY. TETRAHYDROCANNABINOL, OR THC, IS THE MOST PREVALENT CANNABINOID PRESENT IN CANNABIS. THC, BEST KNOWN FOR INDUCING THE HIGH THAT MOST PEOPLE ASSOCIATE WITH CANNABIS, ALSO HAS SEVERAL MEDICAL BENEFITS (REDUCED INFLAMMATION, DECREASED SPASTICITY) AND CANCER FIGHTING PROPERTIES. HOWEVER, THC DOES HAVE A FEW NEGATIVE SIDE EFFECTS SUCH AS REDUCED MOTIVATION, INCREASED SOCIAL ANXIETY, AND MEMORY DEFICITS. EMERGING RESEARCH SUGGESTS THAT THESE NEGATIVE SIDE EFFECTS MAY BE ELIMINATED WHEN THC IS PAIRED WITH ANOTHER CANNABINOID: CANNABIDIOL, OR CBD.

Like THC, CBD is a cannabinoid that acts on your endo-cannabinoid system. Among other benefits, CBD helps fight some types of cancer, reduces inflammation, relieves pain, eases anxiety, stimulates bone growth, protects brain cells, and decreases convulsions. Unfortunately, the vast majority of cannabis strains have high concentrations of THC and very low concentrations of CBD, which may be the cause of the negative side effects commonly associated with cannabis. Fortunately, some cannabis companies are dedicated to eliminating these side effects by producing cannabis oils that contain a 1:1 ratio of THC:CBD.

Everyone has heard of the “lazy stoner” stereotype—the idea that pot smokers can’t possibly accomplish much more in a weekend than rolling a joint, ordering pizza, and watching cartoons. (Come to think of it, this sounds like quite the relaxing weekend.) While this stereotype is a gross exaggeration of reality, there is evidence that many cannabis strains do in fact reduce motivation.

Researchers can test motivation in an eloquently simple

way. Give the participant the choice to complete one of two tasks. One task requires low effort and gives an equally low reward. The other task requires high effort and gives an equally high reward. Choosing the high effort and highly rewarding task is indicative of having more motivation. So how do THC and CBD fit into all of this? It turns out that the participants given equal parts THC and CBD were more likely to choose the harder task in exchange for a better reward while those given only THC were content choosing the easier task and receiving a smaller reward. In other words, CBD may actually protect users from contributing to the “lazy stoner” stereotype.

“The Fear” is a social phenomenon where you get just a bit too high and feel the need to remove yourself from a social situation—like, *right now*. Most of us have experienced this at least once. Maybe you got over it by stepping outside for a moment to get some fresh air. Maybe you got over it by sneaking out the back door, calling an Uber, and texting your friends that you’ll see them tomorrow. Regardless of

your solution, wouldn't it be best to avoid the problem altogether?

This is really just an extreme example of what scientists call social anxiety. Unsurprisingly, scientists have several ways to research and quantify social anxiety. One unique way is to show participants pictures of strangers. Strangers tend to elicit some amount of anxiety in everyone, and this is typically made worse when the stranger has a concerned or scared expression. Research shows that participants who are given THC experience more anxiety than participants given a placebo, a behavioral response that is consistent with The Fear. Interestingly, participants given THC with CBD do not experience any more anxiety than those participants given a placebo. Once again, CBD seems to protect users from negative side effects that THC alone can cause.

The results of a separate study show that CBD alone actually significantly reduces the anxiety caused by public speaking. Participants who take CBD up to 90 minutes before giving a speech have significantly less anxiety, less discomfort, lower blood pressure, and lower heart rates than those who take a placebo. If you have a big speech coming up, maybe try a few practice rounds with some CBD to settle your nerves.

Head cocked slightly to the side, staring blankly into the open cupboard, you ask yourself, "Why did I come to the kitchen?" We've all experienced this moment. Memory isn't exactly a cannabis user's strongpoint—but maybe CBD can help.

By now you know where this is headed. Participants who consume THC with CBD perform better on various memory tasks than those who consume THC alone. Additionally, those who consume THC with CBD have similar scores as participants who are given a placebo. So CBD may completely prevent the memory loss that is common in cannabis users. With CBD's help, maybe you'll remember to grab your favorite snack next time you find yourself in the kitchen.

Although THC is still the primary cannabinoid that produces the psychotropic effects and medicinal benefits often associated with cannabis, pairing it with CBD adds multiple medicinal benefits and reduces some unwanted side effects. Products that contain a 1:1 ratio of THC:CBD are less likely to reduce motivation, cause social withdrawal, or impair memory than those products with minimal amounts of CBD. These products come in oils, edibles, and topicals and are probably already available in your local dispensary. Just look around or ask your budtender. Try them out yourself and let us know what you think.

