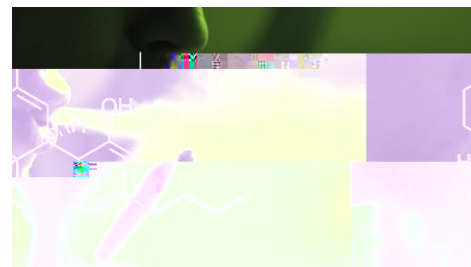


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As of October 17, 2018, the federal government will be legalizing non-medical cannabis in Canada.^{1,2} The _____ (federal), along with the _____ (provincial) will provide the regulatory framework. With this imminent change, the College of Dental Hygienists of BC would like to remind Registered Dental Hygienists of the following:

CDHBC Practice Standard requirements including obtaining informed consent; and,
Refraining from impaired practice.



Registrants should be familiar with the signs and effects of cannabis use and understand how to assess _____ in order to determine if a client is capable of providing informed consent.³ According to the _____ the health care provider must determine whether a client is able to demonstrate that he/she understands the information that is presented in order to make a decision on informed consent or informed refusal to proposed health care.³ This _____ also outlines the elements required for an adult to be able to provide informed consent and/or informed refusal to proposed health care. _____ consent for treatment can be affected by cannabis as it impairs decision-making, memory and behavior.^{4,5} Signs of cannabis intoxication can include marijuana odor, tachycardia, orthostatic hypotension, dry mouth, glassy or red eyes, and impaired concentration and coordination.^{5,6}

Obtaining informed consent for a client that has consumed a cannabis product has the same considerations as for a client who has consumed alcohol and/or taken a pharmaceutical that causes impairment. It is up to the dental hygienist to use professional judgment to determine whether the client has the ability to provide informed consent. This would include understanding their oral health condition, the nature of the planned intervention(s), risks and benefits of the intervention(s) and any alternative courses.³ In the event that the client is not able to provide informed consent and/or the ability to provide informed consent is not clear, dental hygiene care should be postponed until such time when the client can meet the parameters for providing informed consent.

As part of a comprehensive health history, the dental hygienists should understand the differences between cannabis delivery systems and document all aspects of use (including dose and frequency).^{5,7,8} Clients may be using cannabis for recreational or a potential therapeutic use. Therapeutic cannabis may be used for conditions including: nausea and vomiting, anorexia related to HIV/AIDS, MS and pain control, just to name a few.^{5,9} For those using cannabis for recreational use, the dental hygienist should be assessing the stage of change for cessation and provide appropriate help resources. Included in the dental hygiene care plan, education on the potential consequences of cannabis habits on their oral health should be planned.^{7,8}

Common delivery modes of cannabis include: inhaled (e.g. smoking), vaporized, oral ingestion, oromucosal titration, rectal and topical application.⁵ Peak blood levels and duration of cannabinoids vary for each of these delivery methods. For example, peak effects may occur within 15-30 minutes for inhaled

or vaped delivery and 60-90 minutes for oral ingestion.⁵ The dental hygienist should be familiar with these factors related to pharmacokinetics. It is also a responsibility of the dental hygienist to understand the pharmacologic action of cannabis on the body systems, such as the central nervous system cardiovascular and cerebrovascular system, respiratory system, gastrointestinal system, and effects on the eye.⁵

Common Health Canada approved medical prescription cannabis preparations include:^{5,9}

Cesamet® - an oral capsule for nausea and vomiting associated with chemotherapy

Sativex® - an oral-mucosal spray for spasticity and multiple sclerosis

Marinol® - an oral capsule to treat loss of appetite in people with AIDS, nausea and vomiting associated with chemotherapy no longer available for sale in Canada

Education and discussions should be p

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4. Portillo K, Sanderson T, Gurenlian J. Oral health care for marijuana users. J Decisions in Dent. 2018 March;4(3):41-44.
5. Government of Canada [Internet]. Information for Health Care Professionals: Cannabis (marihuana, marijuana) and the cannabinoids; 2013,6b713.0Feabi,6b7ed Au2123()9(2)-3(0)7(1)-3(8)-3(.).5(n)12