

Medicinal Cannabis



How do I get a prescription for medicinal cannabis in NZ?

Any registered doctor in New Zealand can prescribe CBD oil. Doctors are encouraged to only prescribe for a medical condition when conventional treatments are unsuccessful. The Cannabis Clinic has the following tips for those wanting a prescription from their GP:

- a) **Email your GP first.** It will give them the chance to prepare and gather their thoughts. If they are flat out against it, you will find out before spending time and money with an in-person appointment. Try another GP if your usual one isn't open to the discussion.
- b) **If appropriate, book a double appointment.** It is likely that the GP will not have all the information they need to make a prescription. Your GP will need to find out quite a bit of information from you and share it with you to ensure you get the correct prescription. A double appointment will allow time for this in a relaxed environment.
- c) **Bring written information to support your request.** You may be the first person to ask for a medicinal cannabis prescription, so your doctor may not have all the information they need to do this. The Ministry of Health and Bpac have created a prescribing guide which your doctor has access to: [medicinal-cannabis-quick-ref.pdf](https://www.bpac.org.nz/medicinal-cannabis-quick-ref.pdf) (bpac.org.nz)
- d) **Understand that all medicinal cannabis products are unapproved medicines for arthritis and pain management.** All cannabidiol (CBD) products are prescription medicines. The health professional must be satisfied that the brand of medicine they prescribe is appropriate for their patient (including having informed consent). The current body of research does not prove that CBD oil is a treatment for these health conditions. Sativex, a cannabis-based product, is approved as an add-on treatment for symptoms of Multiple Sclerosis but not for any other condition. You will need to sign a consent form stating you are aware of this if you are prescribed CBD oil for arthritis and pain.

For more information go to the Health Navigator website:

<https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/medicines/c/cannabis-based-products/>

PLEASE NOTE: Arthritis New Zealand has not arrived at a formal position on medicinal cannabis. We are waiting for more solid evidence-based research to be published in terms of how it relates to treating different forms of arthritis. We will provide further information in due course.

