

Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome: Care Instructions

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Cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome (CHS) is a condition that can happen to anyone who uses cannabis (e.g. marijuana), especially those who use it regularly. Researchers and healthcare professionals are just beginning to understand more about CHS. The signs and symptoms of CHS can be the same as other medical conditions, so it can be hard to diagnose.

People with CHS often have severe nausea and vomiting that is hard to control. They may vomit more than 20 times a day and it may last more than 24 hours. Other symptoms of CHS include:

- stomach pain
- anxiety
- constipation
- diarrhea
- being very thirsty
- sweating
- a dry mouth

What can I do to feel better and how is CHS treated?

The best way to prevent and treat CHS is by not using cannabis. If you keep using cannabis, your symptoms will get worse and may come back even if they have stopped.

If you have symptoms of CHS, you may feel better and lessen your symptoms by:

- taking a hot shower or bath
- drinking water to stay hydrated
- getting support through friends and family or speaking to a counsellor
- not using cannabis

If you are worried about your symptoms, see your doctor or go to the hospital. If you have nausea and vomiting that lasts for a long time, you may need to take medicine or have intravenous (IV) fluids to help you feel better. Some people may also need medicine to treat anxiety. But these treatments don't work for everyone with CHS and some people find that only hot showers or baths will stop their symptoms. It is important to know what makes your symptoms worse or better, so you get the best care possible when looking for help.

What happens if I stop using cannabis?

When you use cannabis regularly, your body and brain get used to having it so you may become dependent on it. If you are dependent on cannabis, you may have symptoms of withdrawal when you stop taking it. This may cause you to feel nervous, angry and depressed. You may find it hard to relax, feel very tired, have trouble sleeping or have trouble concentrating. You may have chills, shake, sweat a lot, and have headaches or stomach pains. Some people lose weight if they don't feel like eating. But not using cannabis is the only way to prevent CHS.

What should I do if I need help?

Call 911 if you:

- want to hurt yourself or someone else
- have trouble breathing or are breathing very fast

- have a fast heartbeat and pounding in your chest that won't stop
- have chest pain
- have a seizure
- see or feel things that are not there (hallucinate)

See your doctor or call Health Link at **811** if you:

- feel dizzy
- can't keep any fluids down because you're vomiting
- have had treatment for CHS but you have new symptoms or your symptoms are getting worse

If you need help and support to stop using cannabis:

- talk to your doctor about drug counselling programs
- call the Addictions Helpline at 1-866-332-2322
- call the Mental Health Helpline at 1-877-303-2642

For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information call Health Link at 811.

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Author: PADIS (Poison and Drug Information Service)

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