

CONTRAINDICATIONS / RELATIVE CONTRAINDICATIONS CHECKLIST

Medications containing THC may not be appropriate for my patient as they exhibit the following:

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- Have a history of hypersensitivity to any cannabinoid or products used in manufacture (e.g. sesame oil).
- Have severe and unstable cardiopulmonary disease (angina, peripheral vascular disease, cerebrovascular disease and arrhythmias) or risk factors for cardiovascular disease—THC acts through the CB1 receptors to decrease blood pressure, increase cardiac demand and causes vasodilation (In patients with unstable ischaemic heart disease who smoke cannabis, there is a four-fold increased risk of myocardial infarction in the hour following smoking).
- Have a previous psychotic or concurrent active mood disorder or anxiety disorder.
- Are pregnant/breastfeeding—there are some reports of pre-term labour and low birth weight. Cannabinoids appear in breast milk.

RELATIVE CONTRAINDICATIONS

- Care should be taken in prescribing medicinal cannabis products containing THC to patients under 25 due to potential adverse effects on the developing brain. A risk analysis should be undertaken prior to prescribing these products.
- Severe liver or renal disease
- Drug dependence, including nicotine and heavy users of alcohol
- Other medications especially other sedatives such as opioids and benzodiazepine
- Paediatric and elderly patients—little is known about how these patient groups react to cannabis. As metabolism in the elderly is slower it is likely they will be more sensitive to the pharmacological effects of cannabis. Treatment should, therefore, be commenced at very low doses and adjusted very slowly.