

# PROCESSING AND ADMINISTERING MEDICAL CANNABIS

Medical cannabis is processed for administration in various ways: fresh, dried, cold extractions/concentrates and heated extractions/concentrates.

Although rarely done due to the large quantities usually needed, cannabis can be ingested **raw**, freshly cut from the plant, in order to primarily benefit from the acid cannabinoids and their anti-inflammatory effects. Terpenoids remain intact. Psychoactivity is minimized.

**Dried cannabis** is most often consumed by inhaling the burned or vaporized buds. Cannabinoid acids are converted to their neutral forms and the amount of terpenoids available will vary according to the method of administration chosen and the instruments used (pipe, joint, vaporizer).

**Cold extractions/concentrates** result in various products:

1. **Kief:** powder of the trichomes that have fallen off the plant. May be ingested raw but is usually smoked or ingested in cooked edibles.
2. **Slurry:** extraction using olive oil or alcohol. Usually ingested raw.
3. **Hash:** extraction using cold water and ice. May be ingested raw, smoked or used in cooking. Variety names reflect differences in the proportion of plant material to trichomes and how the variety reacts to heat:
  - a. **Bubble** = initially bubbles when exposed to heat.
  - b. **Full bubble** = continues to bubble throughout the heating process.
  - c. **Melt** = melts or turns into goeey oil when exposed to heat.
  - d. **Full melt** = almost pure trichomes, fully melts when exposed to heat leaving little or no residue.
4. **Wax:** extraction using a solvent, most commonly butane, CO<sub>2</sub> or O<sub>2</sub>. Removal (“purging”) of the solvent may be through cold or heat evaporation (which changes the compounds available). Waxes are usually burned or vaporized, but may be used in cooking and in topical salves. Variety names usually refer to consistency. Examples:
  - a. *Honeycomb/Crumble* = dry, crumbly texture, often has small holes like a honeycomb.
  - b. *Budder* = more viscous, consistency like butter.
  - c. *Shatter/Glass* = consistency similar to a hard candy.
  - d. *Sap* = sticky texture similar to honey.
  - e. *Taffy* = firmer than sap but not brittle like shatter.

**Heated extractions/concentrates** convert the cannabinoid acids into their neutral forms and usually removes most of the terpenoids. Various products:

1. **Tea:** extraction into hot water and then drunk.
2. **Tincture:** heated cannabis that is extracted in alcohol. Usually administered directly under the tongue.
3. **Edible:** extraction into a fat (butter, oil) and then used in cooking food.
4. **Oil:** slow heating of cannabis in olive or coconut oil. Usually used in food or topically on skin.
5. **Salve/Cream/Lotion:** low heating of cannabis oil with beeswax. Used topically on skin.

