



The effects of recreational cannabis use on glycemic outcomes and self-management behaviours in people with type 1 and type 2 diabetes: a rapid review

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Summary

More Canadians living with diabetes have been using cannabis, since its legalization in 2018. We looked at what research says about the effects of cannabis use in people with diabetes.

We found **six studies** which mentioned that cannabis use was linked to higher blood sugar levels, poorer self-management behaviours, and greater risks of heart and kidney disease in people with type 1 and type 2 diabetes.

What does this mean?

Although the studies showed similar results, this review does not have enough research to make strong conclusions. More high-quality research is needed to clearly understand how cannabis use affects diabetes and overall health. Future studies should measure changes in the body, such as, oxygen levels, blood pressure, and blood sugar, to better understand how cannabis use affects the biology of people with diabetes.

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What is the current situation?

Canadian surveys show that more people are using cannabis. Recently, there has also been a growing number of Canadians living with diabetes. However, there is little information on the effects of cannabis use in people with diabetes. The growing numbers of diabetics and cannabis users signal the need to inform evidence-based information to these populations.

What questions did we aim to answer in our research?

What does research say about the **effects of cannabis use in people with diabetes** (13+ years of age)?

How did we approach these questions?

- We searched three online scientific databases on this topic.
- Two reviewers screened the studies and collected the data. Any mixed results were resolved by a third reviewer.
- A total of **six studies** were found.

What answers did we find from our research?

- Cannabis users with **type 1 diabetes** reported higher blood sugar levels, poorer blood sugar control, and double the risk of life-threatening diabetes symptoms (such as vomiting or fast breathing).
- Cannabis users with **type 2 diabetes** reported a higher risk of blocked blood vessels, heart attacks, and kidney disease.
- Cannabis users with diabetes also had more **trouble managing their condition**, including struggling to control blood sugar levels).

How confident are we in these findings?

Most of the studies we found were poor to fair quality. Studies relied on self-reported information, had limited details, and did not go through a detailed review process. Because of this, more high-quality research is needed on this topic.