

Marijuana

The topic of using marijuana to lower the pressure inside the eye has gained attention over the past few years since some states have started to legalize the use of marijuana. Glaucoma is an ocular disease that is caused by damage to the optic nerve. The optic nerve is the "cable" that takes information gathered by the eye and sends it to the brain for processing. This damage, which is usually caused by an elevated pressure inside the eye known as elevated intraocular pressure, can lead to a loss of peripheral or side vision. If left untreated, glaucoma can cause total blindness. Treatment for glaucoma is targeted at lowering the eye pressure and can include eye drops, oral medication and laser procedures.



Over the years, studies have looked at the effectiveness of using marijuana to treat glaucoma. These studies tend to have low numbers of participants. This makes it difficult to support the claim that marijuana is an effective drug in lowering the intraocular pressure in glaucoma patients. Some studies have shown a reduction in eye pressure, but the effect on eye pressure lasted only a few hours, making the negative side effects of continuous marijuana use far greater than the benefit of lowering eye pressure. The effect of marijuana on eye pressure is relatively short lived, which makes it less effective than the medications and treatments that are already in place and have FDA approval

In summary, the use of marijuana (in any form) as a medication to reduce eye pressure in glaucoma is not safe or practical. Marijuana also is not a medication that would reduce the risk of developing glaucoma. There are many medications that are FDA approved to treat eye pressure that have very few side effects and need only be used once or twice daily in the form of an eye drop or pill. Additionally, there are some laser and surgical procedures that can help reduce eye pressure. These procedures may eliminate or reduce the number of other medications used to treat eye pressure. Glaucoma can be a difficult disease to diagnose and treat. It requires frequent testing of eye pressure, monitoring visual field loss, and optic nerve evaluations. For further information, talk to your [doctor of optometry](#).