



Pets + Pot: When conventional drugs fail our fur babies, marijuana can help!

With medical marijuana entering the mainstream, there is increasing evidence that it's doing wonders for dog and cat health. But until more research is possible, pet parents must be cautious!

Now that medical marijuana is legal in many states, we're finding that cannabis helps animals in the same ways it helps people. Though more research is needed, federal law prevents veterinarians from studying and prescribing cannabis. At the same time, parents of suffering pets aren't waiting for the law or science to catch up. If you're going to experiment, it's important to know the basics.

What is veterinary cannabis?

It's a medicinal supplement containing cannabinoids— primarily CBD (which has loads of medical benefits) and possibly THC (which is what gets you stoned). Cannabis infused treats, tinctures and salves, specially formulated for pets, can be purchased at marijuana dispensaries and online, where legal. Similar products derived from hemp are legal in the U.S. and available at most pet stores and websites.

Mellow mutts + cool kitties

Like us, dogs and cats have cannabinoid receptors in the brain and central nervous system, which help process appetite, pain, stress and more. Conditions improved by cannabis include cancer, seizures, post-operative pain, irritable bowel syndrome and anxiety. Pet parents report increased appetite and affection in cats going through chemo. Formerly high energy dogs struck down with arthritis want to play again. Results are fast and often allow veterinarians to discontinue or lower the dosage of harsher medications.

Safety first

Until we know more about the effects, side effects and drug interactions of veterinary cannabis, it's important to start with the lowest possible dose. Keep your veterinarian in the loop, especially if your pet is taking prescription medication. Remember that marijuana products made for humans can be toxic to pets. If your dog or cat has gotten into your stash, consult your vet immediately!

Cannabis is complex stuff—chemically and legally—still full of mystery and misconceptions. But when our beloved pets are in pain or anguish, the benefits make it worth looking into.

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